



Social Return on Investment Evaluations on Food and Fibre Work- Based Learning Programmes

Final Report

February 2025



Acknowledgements

The SROI evaluation team would like to thank Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence, and the programmes included in this evaluation for their support with conducting the evaluation. This included providing administrative data, sharing key documents and helping organise interviews.

We would also like to thank all of the programme participants, delivery staff and broader stakeholders for giving up their time and sharing their valuable insights through interviews and surveys that informed the findings of this SROI evaluation.



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Glossary

Term	Definition
Ag-sector	Agricultural sector
BCR	Benefit cost ratio
BE(Hons)	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Forest Engineering
BForSc	Bachelor of Forestry Science
CAFF	Certificate of Agriculture Food and Fibre
The Code	The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021
CPI	Certificate of Primary Industry Skills
CPIO	Certificate of Primary Industry Operational Skills
Deadweight loss effect	The deadweight loss effect refers to the percentage of the outcomes that would have been achieved by the participants even if the respective programme had not been available.
EAP	Employee Assistance Program, a voluntary, confidential service that helps employees deal with personal or work-related issues.
EIT	Eastern Institute of Technology
Food and Fibre CoVE	Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ITO	Industry Training Organisation
Jobs for Nature	Government funded nature-based employment programme that was intended to revitalise communities and stimulate the economy post COVID-19
Kai	Nutrition
KEQ	Key evaluation question
Ko Wai Au	Who Am I
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PGF	Provincial Growth Fund

Term	Definition
Private benefit	This is the benefit the individual gains from their involvement in the respective programme.
The Rubric	Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence Pastoral Care Rubric
SROI	Social Return on Investment
Taskforce Green	A disaster recovery employment support that assists communities with clean-up activities
Te Whare Tapa Whā	Te Whare Tapa Whā is a model developed by Sir Mason Durie that describes wellbeing as a wharenuī/house with four walls. The four walls are te taha hinengaro (mental and emotional well-being), te taha tinana (physical fitness), te taha wairua (personal well-being), and te taha whānau (family and social well-being).
Te Tairāwhiti	Gisborne region
Te Tai Tokerau	Northland region
Te Uru Rākau	Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service
ToC	Theory of Change, also known as intervention logic, outcomes chain, or outcomes map

Executive Summary

About this evaluation

Aotearoa New Zealand has a range of food and fibre work-based learning programmes, which aim to equip young people (programme participants) with the necessary skills and connect them with their chosen field, and develop work-ready trainees for the sectors involved. Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (Food and Fibre CoVE) commissioned the report and were supported by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to undertake a Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation to measure the impact of five work-based food and fibre learning programmes.¹

Given the current sustainable funding challenges faced by some of these programmes, the purpose of this SROI evaluation is to understand the impact of each programme, including the calculation of a SROI cost-benefit ratio for each of the programmes. The five programmes selected for this evaluation were chosen based on discussions with the Associate Minister of Agriculture Andrew Hoggard, with whom the findings will be shared.²

The five programmes in scope for this evaluation were:

- Growing Future Farmers programme: a programme targeting young people interested in farming that offers qualifications in NZ Certificate in Primary Industries Level 2 and 3, NZ Certificate in Pre-Employment Skills Level 3, NZ Certificate in Agriculture, Meat and/or Fibre Strand Level 3, and the Growing Future Farmers Programme Certificate in Essential Farm Skills.
- Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme: a programme targeting local young people interested in farming that offers qualifications in NZ Certificate in Agriculture Level 3 and NZ Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills Level 3.
- The Generation Programme: a programme targeting local young people interested in forestry that offers qualifications in NCEA in Primary (Forestry) Vocational Pathways Level 2, NZ Certificate in Forest Foundation Skills Level 2, and NZ Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations Level 3.
- Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways: a programme which aims to provide an alternative pathway for young people for whom a traditional school environment is not suitable. The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme offers qualifications in NZ Certificate in Forest Industry Foundation Skills Level 2 and Forestry Unit Standards Level 3.
- Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau scholarship programme: a programme that targeted Māori and people who identify as female a scholarship to complete a Bachelor of Forestry Science degree and a Diploma of Forest Management. Scholarships were also offered for a Bachelor of

¹ This evaluation has been referred to as a Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation as a key focus of the evaluation was to gather evidence that would support the calculation of a Social Return on Investment Cost-Benefit Ratio.

² This is not an exhaustive list of all work-based food and fibre learning programmes available in New Zealand. There are a range of programmes across Aotearoa New Zealand, including programmes that serve more mature adults.

Engineering (Hons) in Forestry. It was originally offered for Māori and women, but the criteria was expanded in 2022 to allow all New Zealand residents to apply due to identified skills shortages in this sector.

This SROI evaluation has assessed the performance of the five programmes against four key evaluation questions (KEQs):

1. To what extent does the programme address an identified need?
2. To what extent have the programme's intended outcomes been realised?
3. How effective has the pastoral care been in enabling young people to successfully complete the programme?
4. What lessons have been learned?

Conducting the SROI evaluation involved developing a Theory of Change (ToC) for each programme that established the expected outputs and outcomes.

The SROI evaluation employed mixed-methods for data collection. This included reviewing key documents, programme administrative data, key informant interviews, interviews with a range of stakeholders, and online surveys. The evidence from these data were compared against criteria that reflected aspects of performance in line with each KEQ: appropriateness, coherence, impact and effectiveness.

The analysis of the SROI cost-benefit ratios adopted the 'life course' theory, which promotes early preventative interventions that reduce the need for remedial actions later in life. The process of calculating the SROI cost-benefit ratios involved making a series of assumptions related to the benefits of education, applying the counterfactual of what outcome a participant might have achieved were it not for the programme, accounting for the net impact of spillover benefits, and identifying the costs involved in developing and delivering the programmes. Where possible outcomes were monetised.

Key findings

All of the programmes returned a net positive SROI cost-benefit ratio that ranged from 3.5 to 17.0 for every dollar invested at a scheme level and 5.9 to 18.9 at a per person level. The vocational programmes that served young people facing social and academic challenges delivered the highest SROI cost-benefit ratio with the Generation Programme returning 10.3, Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme 7.3 and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme 17.0. Key factors in the higher SROI cost-benefit ratios were the scale of personal and societal outcomes.

The pastoral care formed a crucial component of the success of these programmes, with a focus on providing the support participants needed to be able to successfully complete their programme and become work ready.³ Without the pastoral care provided, many of these young people could struggle to gain meaningful support to assist them to remain in their education programme. The likely

³ The exact investment for the pastoral care cannot be quantified as it cannot be separated from other actions and costs associated with programme delivery. The pastoral care is included as in-kind support in the SROI calculation.

alternative would be a minimum wage job, with some potentially becoming a not in education, employment or training (NEET). The quality of the pastoral care was benchmarked against the Food and Fibre CoVE rubric (the Rubric). This benchmarking showed the quality of pastoral care varied from **Acceptable to Excellent**.

The pastoral care generally involved face-to-face visits, support with literacy issues, practical support to develop the necessary skills, monitoring, and broader well-being support. For the Generation Programme, offered by Tūranga Ararau, this also included involving whānau and kaumātua. Some programmes had developed relationships with specialist providers to whom they referred participants who needed additional support. These types of supports ranged from help with developing financial literacy through to helping address mental health, and/or alcohol and drug issues. The evidence indicates that pastoral care was highly valued by participants, host farmers and forestry businesses.

A contributing factor to the net positive SROI cost-benefit ratios was the programmes led to most participants achieving improved educational outcomes. The range of qualifications gained through these programmes ranged from credits towards NCEA Level 2 through to a degree. Further, programme participants developed entry-level knowledge and skills that made them both 'work ready' and 'ready for work'.

The SROI evaluation found that all the programmes helped fill labour shortages in farming, forestry, or allied primary sector roles by improving access to suitably qualified workers. Moreover, indications are that industry valued the knowledge and skills gained with programmes reporting demand from local employers exceeds the number of available programme graduates. Anecdotal evidence also suggested that in some instances these programmes can reduce reliance on immigrant labour, especially for farming.

In addition, the four vocational programmes generated a range of intangible benefits which included improved participant self-confidence, self-esteem, enhanced connections with their community and stronger work ethic. The Generation Programme also supported young people to develop a strong sense of their cultural heritage and identity. These intangible benefits contribute both to the work readiness of participants, enabling them to work independently as required, and improved total well-being contributing to improved personal outcomes.

Although these programmes experience ongoing demand from potential participants and industry, they face some challenges in terms of continued viability. A key challenge for their long-term sustainability is securing continued funding. A contributing factor to this difficulty is they are not considered tertiary education providers and cannot offer apprenticeships. Although these programmes use a mixed funding model, the reliance by some programmes on government funding means they are operating within relatively short-term funding contracts. If further funding is not secured, these programmes are likely to be at risk of closing. For example, the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme is no longer on offer as Government funding ceased in 2023. The lack of secure funding also makes it difficult to engage in future planning and growth.

A further challenge for some programmes is having limited workforce capacity to deliver the programme, making their workforce continuity planning challenging. For instance, Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme rely on two

to three key people responsible for planning, training and providing pastoral care. These vulnerabilities are to some extent mitigated through partnering with other organisations, and/or engaging individuals to support delivery of the programme. In addition, the growth of the vocational programmes is constrained by finding host employers, particularly suitable host farmers. That said, the Growing Future Farmers programme has grown from an initial regional pilot in 2020 to operating in 14 regions.

Conclusion

All the programmes provided a positive return for participants, industry and society. The SROI cost-benefit ratios for these programmes ranged from 3.5 to 17.0 at a scheme level. The three programmes that provided the most intensive support and served those with the highest level of need delivered the highest SROI cost-benefit ratios. Without these programmes, a portion of these programme participants would probably have at best ended up with minimum wage employment, with some potentially becoming a NEET. Such outcomes have a cost to society such as lost productivity and social welfare costs, as well as personal costs such as diminished total well-being. Instead, these programmes supported participants to successfully transition from school or being a NEET into employment, delivering social and economic benefits over a lifetime.

This SROI evaluation found the pastoral care delivered in these programmes played a crucial role in enabling participants to complete their programme. This was particularly the case for the vocational programmes supporting young people who faced a range of social and academic challenges. The pastoral care provided led to these young people both gaining qualifications and meaningful sustainable employment they may not have achieved otherwise.

Additionally, these programmes are making a positive contribution to filling labour gaps, with the evidence suggesting that industry values the work skills and knowledge generated through these programmes. As programmes become established and develop a positive reputation, indications are that demand typically grows until it exceeds supply. However, for many of these programmes scaling up to be able to meet increasing industry demand is challenging.

One consistent challenge of expanding was the insecure, short-term nature of their funding due to a reliance on government, even when they use a mixed funding model. This problem is compounded as these vocational programmes do not qualify as tertiary education providers which would allow them to receive longer-term funding and offer apprenticeships. While they do not qualify for education funding, some programmes are eligible for funding that target groups such as those who are a NEET. For instance, one programme has received government funding from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Flexi-wage subsidy, which target long-term unemployment issues. Accessing this type of funding could lead to a shift from the programme's current preventative approach with a focus on serving young people, often school leavers, to becoming a remedial intervention with a focus on serving NEETs or long-term unemployed. Such a change would reduce the SROI cost-benefit ratios.

Finally, vocational programmes that use an earn-as-you-learn model make education more accessible for young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds who are more likely to face social and economic challenges. In comparison, programmes that use a model of paying a weekly living allowance rather than wages, may unintentionally create a financial burden that act as a barrier for

some young people to participate in the programme. This is because the financial payment is often too low to cover living costs. The difference in these two approaches, potentially raise policy questions about the purpose of these programmes. If it is simply to address labour shortages, then either approach could be desirable. On the other hand, if the intention is to also provide young people facing multiple challenges with accessible vocational pathways to transition into meaningful work, then the earn-as-you-learn model maybe preferred, or the stipend paid may need to be increased to cover living costs. It is worth noting that those programmes that target young people facing multiple challenges return a higher SROI cost-benefit ratio.

ABOUT THIS EVALUATION



1 About this evaluation

1.1 Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand has a range of food and fibre work-based learning programmes, which aim to equip young people (programme participants) with the necessary skills and connect them with their chosen field, and develop work-ready trainees for the sectors involved. Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (Food and Fibre CoVE) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) have commissioned this Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation to measure the impact of five work-based food and fibre learning programmes.⁴

Given the current sustainable funding challenges faced by some of these programmes, the purpose of this SROI evaluation is to understand the impact that each programme has including the calculation of a SROI cost-benefit ratio for each of the programmes. The findings from this SROI evaluation will be reported to Associate Minister Andrew Hoggard.

This SROI evaluation was conducted between October 2024 and January 2025.

1.2 Scope

The programmes that are in scope for this SROI evaluation are:

- the Growing Future Farmers programme
- the Whangarei A & P Farm Internship programme
- the Generation Programme
- the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme
- the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme

Another two programmes were suggested but elected to not participate. They were: Whakatōhea Mussels – Tūāpapa Programme and Farmlands Summer Internship.⁵

An overview of the five programmes (four vocational and one degree) is provided in **Table 1** and **Table 2** on the following pages.⁶

⁴ This evaluation has been referred to as a SROI evaluation as a key focus of the evaluation was to gather evidence that would support the calculation of a Social Return on Investment Cost-Benefit Ratio.


⁵ There are a range of work-based food and fibre learning programmes across New Zealand, including programmes that serve other groups. The five programmes selected for this evaluation were chosen based on discussions with Associate Minister of Agriculture Andrew Hoggard.

⁶ Information about the funding sources for the individual programmes has not been included in this table due to the complexities involved. For example, programmes have used multiples sources of funding, with many sources changing every one to two years. Also, some programmes viewed information about their funding sources as commercially sensitive, while they were willing to provide a high-level overview of funding arrangements to support the SROI assessment, they were less willing to share more detailed information. Funding is discussed in **section 2.2.5**.

Table 1: Overview of programmes - farming sector

	 GROWING FUTURE FARMERS	WHANGAREI A&P FARM INTERNSHIP
LOCATION	Nationwide (<i>14 regions</i>)	Te Tai Tokerau (<i>Whangārei</i>)
SECTOR	Farming (<i>Sheep and beef</i>)  	Farming (<i>Dairy, sheep and beef</i>)   
ANNUAL PARTICIPANT NUMBERS	<i>Approximately</i> 139	<i>Approximately</i> 17
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 16-24 • NCEA Level 2 literacy and numeracy • Must provide their own equipment/gear, as set out in a gear list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 16-24 • Locally based in Te Tai Tokerau
STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42-44 weeks per year for two years • One day a week in class-based training • Student allowance model • Host farmers provide coaching and practical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-programme 5-6 day camp • 44 weeks per year • One or two years • Earn-as-you-learn model • One day a week in class (<i>training partner-led</i>) • Four days a week on farm (<i>farmer-led</i>)
PASTORAL CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face contact and progress reporting by Student Success Advisors • Industry and academic partner support • Regional cohort events • EAP services available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly-on-farm visits including using SaferMe app for monitoring • One-on-one training interventions • Literacy support • Te Whare Tapa Whā support
QUALIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Certificate in Primary Industries, Level 2 and 3 • NZ Certificate in Pre-Employment Skills, Level 3 • NZ Certificate in Agriculture, (Meat and/or Fibre strand), Level 3 • The Growing Future Farmers programme Certificate in Essential Farm Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems - Dairy, Sheep or Beef Finishing strand), Level 3 • NZ Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills, Level 3 • NZ Certificate in Agriculture (Dairy, Breeding, or Non-Breeding strand), Level 4

Table 2: Overview of programmes - forestry sector

		THE GENERATION PROGRAMME	TOKOMAIRO TRAINING FORESTRY PATHWAYS	NGĀ KARAHIPi URU RĀKAU SCHOLARSHIP
LOCATION		Te Tairāwhiti	South Otago	Canterbury
SECTOR		Forestry	Forestry	Forestry
ANNUAL PARTICIPANT NUMBERS		<i>Approximately 36</i>	<i>Approximately 11</i>	<i>Approximately 8 per year (scholarships)</i>
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 15-24 • Locally based in Tairāwhiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 12/13 programme participants from Otago schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolled in qualifications • Target: Māori and/or female for Bachelor of Forestry Science and Diploma of Forest Management • Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Forest Engineering was open to all post-2022
STRUCTURE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-week base camp – mix of theory and practical • 12-week placement (employed) • Earn-as-you-learn model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 weeks, alongside school • Two days a week • Mix of theory and practical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree: \$8,000 per year and 3 x Ten-week paid internships • Diploma: \$7,000 per year and 1 x Ten-week paid internship
PASTORAL CARE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Whare Tapa Whā support • Kaumātua support • Ko Wai Au whakapapa activity • Personal development plan • 12-week placement support • Post-Programme manaaki for up to two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with whānau and school • Team-building activities • Weekly sessions on goal setting/ career planning • Post-Course follow-up and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and visits from Scholarship Coordinator • Programme participants support each other via buddy system • Additional academic support
QUALIFICATION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCEA in Primary (Forestry) Vocational Pathways, Level 2 • NZ Certificate in Forest Foundation Skills, Level 2 • NZ Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations, Level 3 • NZ Certificate in Forest Operations, Level 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Certificate in Forest Industry Foundation Skills, Level 2 • Forestry Unit Standards, Level 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Forest Engineering • Bachelor of Forestry Science • Diploma of Forest Management

The SROI evaluation included specific emphasis on the pastoral care provided under each programme because this was seen as a critical driver of whether participants completed their programme. An assessment of how well the pastoral care component of each programme is working is a critical element of this SROI evaluation.

In addition, this SROI evaluation has investigated three components of the programmes:

- The overall viability of these programmes including:
 - the existence (or not) of ongoing demand for these programmes versus a potential demand for a variation of the existing programme
 - the ability of current providers to sustainably provide the existing programme(s)
 - whether there are known gaps or weaknesses in provision. For example, unmet demand for the current programme(s) or demand for an alternative programme(s).
- The tangible and intangible benefits of these programmes, including:
 - at a discrete programme level, with a particular focus on pastoral care; and
 - the SROI cost-benefit ratio that can be attributed to this.
- A benchmarking against pastoral care offered in the standard food and fibre Industry Training Organisation (ITO) model, including:
 - consideration of the extent to which elements of the identified programmes' pastoral care model and the enhance each other.

1.3 Key evaluation questions

The SROI evaluation was guided by four KEQs designed to assess different components of the programmes:

1. To what extent does the programme address an identified need?
2. To what extent have the programme's intended outcomes been realised?
3. How effective has the pastoral care been in enabling young people to successfully complete the programme?
4. What lessons have been learned?

1.4 SROI evaluation criteria

SROI evaluation criteria are the aspects of performance that were the focus of each KEQ. The criteria provide an explicit basis against which overall judgements about the performance of each programme can be made. The criteria were informed by the ToC developed for each programme and covered:

- **Appropriateness:** whether the programme meets a real need.
- **Coherence:** whether the programme fits in well with other vocational opportunities and adds value.
- **Impact:** whether the programme is making a difference, like helping achieve short- and medium-term outcomes.

- **Effectiveness:** whether the programme's pastoral care is enabling young people to complete the programme.

The SROI evaluation framework which sets out the KEQ, criteria, areas of investigation and indicators of success for each programme is included in **Appendix A**.

1.5 Pastoral care

A key focus for this SROI evaluation was assessing the quality and impact of the pastoral care provided by the five programmes. The original scope of the SROI evaluation included a request to benchmark the pastoral care provided by these programmes against the ITO model. The pastoral care requirements for the ITO sector are included in the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code).⁷

However, while some aspects of the programmes are delivered by accredited vocational/tertiary education and training providers (e.g., the class-based training components for Growing Future Farmers programme (EIT) and Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme (Land Based Training)) the programme organisations are not accredited vocational/tertiary education training providers and therefore do not need to meet the Code requirements. Therefore, it is out of the scope of this evaluation to assess whether the programmes are meeting the requirements of the Code.

Therefore, the assessment of the quality of the pastoral care provided by these programmes has involved applying the Food and Fibre CoVE Pastoral Care rubric (the Rubric) which is part of the Food and Fibre CoVE Vocational Excellence Framework.⁸ The Rubric (see **Table 3** below) is based on two attributes of pastoral care: participation and access, and systems. The evaluation team found the Rubric was appropriate for assessing the programmes against the two attributes.

Table 3: Food and Fibre CoVE Pastoral Care Rubric

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Participation and access Holistic and culturally responsive pastoral care drives parity of participation and access. Providers understand the value of providing pastoral care, enhancing wellbeing and outcomes in learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral care is available for learners during the learning programme. • Learners are aware of the available pastoral support and ways to access it. • All stakeholders in the system are aware of the benefits of pastoral 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral care is available for all learners regardless of modes of delivery. • Learners can access throughout learning journey, including pre and post learning (e.g., to help potential learners identify correct learning programmes). • All stakeholders in the system actively seek to 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke, holistic pastoral care is available to suit different needs and preferences (e.g., covers academic, cultural, emotional needs, is responsive to where learners are on their learning/career pathway). • All stakeholders in the system are consistent in their implementation of pastoral care systems and processes.

⁷ NZQA (2021). The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

⁸ The Food and Fibre CoVE Vocational Excellence Framework is a set of rubrics developed and maintained to establish the consistent set of criteria by which the food and fibre sector can measure the level of vocational excellence achieved in the design and delivery of vocational education and training services.

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
	care systems and processes.	utilise pastoral care systems and processes.	
Systems Systems are in place to ensure pastoral care meets learners needs and is monitored to ensure outcomes are achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are seeking opportunities to provide pastoral care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with learners to ensure the pastoral care provided meets their needs. Monitoring participation to ensure all learners are equally supported. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are actively seeking opportunities to provide pastoral care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with local communities to provide input into, or deliver culturally relevant interventions (e.g., mentorship programmes). Monitoring and reviewing their systems to ensure all learners are equally supported. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are actively seeking opportunities to provide personalised pastoral care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with learners to address their individual needs. Engaging with learners, local representative groups, organisations and communities to input into or deliver culturally relevant interventions. Monitoring participation to ensure all learners are equally supported; using metrics to continually inform/update the delivery model; monitoring risks of discontinued activities and actively mitigating risks.

1.6 Theory of Change development

To assess the impact of the programmes, including calculating the SROI cost-benefit ratio, a Theory of Change (ToC) was developed for each programme. Development of the ToC involved:

- Generating a 'skeleton' ToC based on a review of key programme documents.
- Facilitating a workshop with key programme delivery staff to seek feedback on the skeleton ToC to identify any inaccuracies and/or gaps.
- Refining the ToC based on feedback to ensure the inputs, activities and outcomes are fit-for-purpose.
- Ensuring the identified outputs and outcomes were quantifiable, where possible, and aligned with SROI cost-benefit ratio requirements.

The ToC which sets out the inputs, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes, medium-term outcomes, long-term outcomes and impact for each of the programmes is included in **Appendix B**.

1.7 Data collection methods

The SROI evaluations of the programmes applied a mixed-methods approach as described below.

- A review of key documents provided contextual information about each programme including its funding, selection requirements, course content, and information about the difference the respective programme was making. This information was primarily used to inform the development of the ToC. The types of documents that were reviewed included financial statements, funding agreements or applications, quarterly reports, performance reports, participant handbooks, previous evaluation reports and prospectus material. More information is provided in **Appendix C**.
- Key informant interviews were conducted online with two Food and Fibre CoVE and two MPI representatives. These interviews provided important contextual information that helped the SROI evaluation team gain an understanding of the need for these programmes and the role of pastoral care from a systems-level perspective.
- The SROI evaluation needed to understand the extent to which the programmes were meeting an identified need, whether short- and medium-term outcomes were being achieved and the value of the pastoral care. To do this, the SROI evaluation approach included conducting interviews with programme participants, delivery staff, host employers, and broader key stakeholders. A total of 44 interviews were conducted online with 60 stakeholders (see **Table 4** on the following page for more details). These interviews enabled the SROI evaluation team to explore in more depth the difference these programmes were making both for individual programme participants and for the farming and forestry sectors.
- Short online surveys were conducted for each programme that targeted programme participants, host employers and other key stakeholders. The surveys mostly sought to capture breadth of views on the benefits of the programmes and achievement of outcomes. The surveys also included a small number of open-ended questions designed to capture information about what was working well and improvements that could be made to strengthen the programmes. Potential participants were given an option to either be interviewed or participate in a survey. Out of the 76 people given this option, 25 opted for an interview (approximately 33%), making the total sample size for the surveys very small (n= 51) (see **Table 4** for details of the evaluation data sources for each programme).
- Administrative data was used to assess the performance of the programmes against key outputs. The administrative data collected by the programmes included quantitative data on programme participant backgrounds, employment and qualification outcomes as well as programme budgets and costs for each year since inception.⁹

⁹ Not all programmes were able to provide administrative data.

Table 4 below provides an overview of the methods and number of participants for each programme.

Table 4: Overview of data sources for each programme

Programme	Documents reviewed	Number of stakeholders contacted for interviews	Number of interviewees	Number of survey respondents
Growing Future Farmers	11	38	21	3
Whangarei A&P Farm Internship	6	25	12	2
The Generation Programme	4	12	9	-
Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways	3	6	5	7 ¹⁰
Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship	17	52	9	11

A total of six sense-making sessions were held: one with each programme and one with Food and Fibre CoVE. These sessions were used to test the findings from the SROI evaluation and to obtain any additional contextual information that may influence the findings.

1.8 SROI cost-benefit ratio calculation method

The focus of the SROI cost-benefit ratios was on public investment in vocational training, which came from a mix of government, industry, community groups and philanthropy with no expectation of a private return. The social return can include a private economic return, such as higher earnings, and a public economic return, such as lower expenditure on social welfare benefits or healthcare.

The analysis adopted the ‘life course’ theory which promotes early preventative interventions that reduce the need for remedial actions later in life. A summary of the key aspects of the SROI method are provided below, with a more detailed explanation of the approach to calculating the SROI cost-benefit ratios is provided in **Appendix D**..

¹⁰ Although a survey was developed for the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme participants, timing of the survey coincided with the annual feedback collected from programme participants by Tokomairiro Training. As a result, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme chose not to share our survey with the programme participants. However, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme shared the responses the programme participants provided to their end of programme feedback survey.

1.8.1 Benefits of education

Empirical studies typically find that on average, an additional year of education increases an individual's future earnings by somewhere between 5% and 15%.¹¹ Variations due to individuals' innate abilities and non-cognitive characteristics such as initiative, attentiveness and perseverance affect these estimates. Based on this and other studies, the calculation of the SROI cost-benefit ratios has assumed after ten years:

- a 20% premium for Levels 2 and 3 over the minimum wage
- a further 10% for Level 4
- a further 10% for a diploma, and
- a further 20% for a degree.

1.8.2 Counterfactual assumptions

A counterfactual is required to calculate a SROI cost-benefit ratio. For these programmes the counterfactual that was applied is what outcome a programme participant might have achieved were it not for the attending one of the selected food and fibre vocational programmes. Although the counterfactual can never be known with certainty, it has been assumed the counterfactual qualification is one level lower than they would otherwise achieve. For example, programmes that end with participants receiving a diploma, the assumed counterfactual is a NZQA Level 4. Similarly for programmes that lead to Level 2 or Level 3, the assumed counterfactual is the minimum wage. Further, these counterfactuals may be conservative given the academic and social challenges that some of these programme participants encounter.

1.8.3 Allowing for spillover benefits

There is a strong link between education outcomes and personal and societal well-being, albeit that causation can run in both directions. These spillover benefits include better health, less involvement in crime, lower probability of unemployment and improved civic participation. Spillover benefits also arise from better labour market matching and maintaining community connection.

A shorthand method to account for the net impact of spillover benefits through a better educated population which improves societal welfare is to use a national productivity benefit, expressed as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person of working age. For these programmes the assumed percentage of GDP per person was:

- 2% for the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and the Generation Programme
- 1.5% for the Growing Future Farmers programme

¹¹ This depends on location, date of study and analysis technique.

- 1% for the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme.¹²

1.8.4 SROI cost-benefit ratio data

The process of calculating the SROI cost-benefit ratios involved identifying the costs incurred to develop and deliver the programmes and, where possible, monetising the expected outcomes, including the spillover benefits. Data to support calculation of the SROI cost-benefit ratios included:

- annual costs (e.g., operating costs and staff wages) per programme
- value of 'in kind' support. For example, some programmes received philanthropic donations of clothing and other farm gear
- costs of unallocated overheads
- the value of scholarships and allowances paid to programme participants
- the annual number of participants in each programme
- programme success rates such as the number of completions, successfully achieving associated qualifications, moving on to either further education or employment.
- The value of spillover benefits was estimated on GDP per person of working age for the year ended March 2024, which is \$96,298. This makes a spillover benefit of 1% \$963 per person.¹³

1.9 Limitations to the SROI evaluation

The findings of this SROI evaluation should be considered in the context of the approach, the tight timeframe for undertaking the SROI evaluation and data collection limitations.

- The sample sizes for interviews were relatively small, especially for the Generation Programme, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme. In addition, although all programmes have host industry employers, the number that were interviewed for each programme was particularly limited, with no host industry employers interviewed for the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and the Generation Programme. As a result, the sample was not fully representative. This means the findings are not necessarily generalisable, especially in relation

¹² The allocation of percentage of GDP per person was higher for Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme, and Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programmes as they served young people more likely to be facing a range of social challenges including coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or were at risk of becoming a NEET. The lowest allocation was given to those engaging in degree or diploma level learning as it was assumed they were less likely to be facing multiple social challenges and at a much lower risk of experiencing negative social outcomes. The Growing Future Farmers programme was positioned in between because it requires young people to purchase their own equipment including owning a car, laptop and smartphone and pays a student allowance rather than a wage. Such requirements suggest the Growing Future Farmers programme predominantly serves young people with more available resources, including family financial support.

¹³ In addition, it is worth noting the minimum wage for full-time work is \$47,343.

to the extent these programmes are contributing to meeting farming and forestry workforce needs.

- The sample size for the surveys were small (see **Table 4** above). This is in part a result of many potential participants choosing to be interviewed over completing a survey. Programmes also did not always have contact details for past participants, reducing the number that could be invited to participate. Further, the response rates tended to be low with the exception of the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme where ten out of 17 responded (approximately 59%). As a result, beyond the open text responses it is difficult to derive meaningful findings from the quantitative responses.
- Programmes generally had limited data relating to medium and longer-term outcomes that could be attributed to the programmes. This was partly due to how recently the programmes had been set up, meaning that medium- and long-term outcomes could not be assessed. There were also challenges associated with tracking programme participants' engagement in education and/or employment 12 months or more post-programme.
- The quality of the administration data and the types of data collected by the different programmes was variable. This is in part due to capacity and capability constraints within many of these organisations. The exception was Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme who was able to provide high quality administrative data, but the data provided by the other programmes was variable. To provide as accurate picture as possible, where there are contradictions in the data, the SROI evaluation team has used the more conservative figure.
- Except for Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, there was a lack of information on the deadweight loss effect for each programme. The deadweight loss effect refers to the percentage of the outcomes (e.g., qualification and working on a farm or forest) that would have been achieved by the participants even if the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme had not been available.

KEY FINDINGS



2 Key findings

2.1 Programmes return a positive SROI, delivering a range of benefits for both participants and industry

2.1.1 Summary

The SROI evaluation found that all the programmes that were evaluated deliver a range of tangible and intangible benefits, returning positive SROI cost-benefit ratios that ranged from 3.5 to 17.0 for each dollar invested at a scheme level and 5.9 to 18.9 at a per person level.

The evidence indicates that tangible benefits included gaining qualifications and work experience that led to employment for most participants. The level of qualification gained varied across the programmes from Level 2 NCEA units through to completing a degree. On completion of the programmes, the majority of participants moved onto employment and a small minority moved on to further education or training. A small number of participants did not immediately enter employment or education, however that is not to say they did not become employed at a later date.¹⁴

A further contributing factor to the positive SROI cost-benefit ratios for the four vocational programmes, were the range of intangible benefits that are potentially transformational for some young people. These included improved self-confidence, improved self-esteem and enhanced sense of connection to their local community, which in the medium to longer-term lead to stronger and more productive engagement with society, such as improved civic engagement, and a reduction in the risk of becoming dependent on state welfare or becoming involved in crime. The Generation Programme also supported programme participants to develop a strong sense of their cultural heritage and identity through their Ko Wai Au (Who am I) programme.

When interpreting the SROI cost-benefit ratios it is important to note the results are not comparable due to substantial differences between these programmes. These substantial differences include variance in the demographics they serve, differences in purpose, and the underpinning model that is applied. For example, programme participants attending university typically do not face the same level of disadvantage as participants in programmes such as the Generation Programme or Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme. Further, while some programmes used an earn-as-you-learn model in which participants were employees, other programmes used a vocational training approach in which participants received a weekly living allowance. As such, investment decisions need to be informed by both the SROI cost-benefit ratio and the problem the investment is seeking to address.

2.1.2 Programmes yield a positive Social Return on Investment

The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme shows a high rate of return per dollar invested, at 17 for the scheme and 18.9 per participant. The high rate of return is due to the low cost incurred per participant, as they are not paid, and a high spillover benefit, which is attributable to the

¹⁴ Post programme outcome data is not publicly available for comparable programmes so the evaluation was unable to assess how employment outcomes for these programmes compared to similar programmes.

characteristics of participants. The Generation Programme has a similar mix of participants and operates generating a rate of return of 10.3 for the scheme and 12.1 per participant for every dollar invested.

Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme sits at the other end of the scale, with a rate of return of 3.5 for the scheme and 5.9 per participant for every dollar invested, although it still covers its costs more than five times over. The Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme is the only programme that is focused on higher qualifications of degrees and diplomas and does not target young people that are at risk of ending up on the fringes of society if they do not participate. This is reflected in the lower spillover benefits assumed, and a relatively greater share of the return on investment being captured by the participant through higher earnings. For the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, the assumption is that spillover benefits occur from age 22, by which age most participants have completed their qualifications. For all other programmes, participants typically reach completion by age 20 or 21.

The Growing Future Farmers programme is the largest programme in terms of the annual number of active participants, typically having more than 100 programme participants each year. The cost per participant is relatively high because they receive allowances, which contributes to a lower benefit cost ratio (BCR) than for the other programmes. However, this programme still delivers a net positive return of 6.4 for the scheme and 7.3 per participant for each dollar invested.

Table 5 below shows the share of the benefit that a participant gains through higher earnings. While they may see other types of private benefits, such as improved health, these are captured in the social (non-earnings) benefits.¹⁵ A detailed explanation of the SROI cost-benefit ratios is provided in **Appendix D**.

Table 5: Summary of SROI cost-benefit ratio analysis

	Main qualifications gained	Annual participant numbers	Annual cost per programme participant	Total BCR per participant	% private benefit	Assumed spillover effect	Scheme BCR
Growing Future Farmers	Levels 2 & 3	139	\$19,561	7.3	85%	1.5%	5.7
Whangarei A&P Farm Internship	Levels 3 & 4	17	\$17,237	8.4	78%	2.0%	7.3
Generation Programme	Level 3	26	\$12,846	12.1	80%	2.0%	10.3
Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways	Levels 2 & 3	11	\$8,186	18.9	81%	2.0%	17.0

¹⁵ Private benefit refers to the individual gains from participants' involvement in the respective programme.

	Main qualifications gained	Annual participant numbers	Annual cost per programme participant	Total BCR per participant	% private benefit	Assumed spillover effect	Scheme BCR
Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship	Diploma & Degree	8	\$15,753	5.9	92%	1.0%	3.5

2.1.3 Participants benefit from the knowledge and skills gained, making them well positioned to secure sustainable and meaningful employment

The programmes deliver benefits in increasing participant and knowledge, making them well positioned to enter meaningful employment or further education/training in farming, forestry or allied primary sector roles. Without these programmes some participants, especially Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme would most likely either have minimum wage jobs or be unemployed. One past participant mentioned they would *“probably be unemployed”* if they had not taken part in their programme and a delivery staff member stated that *“some who would have been mischief got a job instead.”* A few participants reflected that without their respective programme they may have been engaged in criminal activity; their respective programmes were seen as giving them a chance to put their lives back on track.

Further, interviews with stakeholders suggest these programmes are effective in preparing participants for the workforce with some programmes, such as the Generation Programme, increasingly approached by industry for programme graduates. Anecdotally, it would appear these programmes are contributing to filling skill shortages in farming, forestry and allied primary industries by improving access to suitably qualified workers. For example, some delivery staff reported their programme was developing a reputation for providing suitably qualified workers. In one instance, an interviewee shared that a farmer had taken on a programme participant instead of relying on immigrant workers.

2.1.3.1 The Growing Future Farmers programme

Administrative data, along with interview evidence shows that on completion of the Growing Future Farmers programme most participants move on to employment. The data shows that 94 out of 127 (74%) who completed the Growing Future Farmers programme in the 2020 to 2024 cohorts have moved on to employment, including some on casual contracts while looking for permanent work.

One programme participant in 2021 and another in 2024 are reported to have moved on to further training. **Table 6** (on the following page) shows a year-on-year breakdown of the number of participants that gained a Certificate of Primary Industry Skills (CPI) Level 2, Certificate of Primary Industry Operational Skills (CPIO) Level 3, or Certificate of Agriculture Food and Fibre (CAFF) Level 3 between 2020 to 2024. Out of the 257 participants who enrolled in Year One between 2020 and 2024, 223 (86%) completed a CPI, and out of the 137 participants who enrolled in Year Two between 2020 and 2024, 87 (64%) completed a CAFF and 122 (89%) completed a CPIO. Overall, this indicates the Growing Future Farmers programme results in a high rate of achievement.

Table 6: Number of participants who achieved a qualification

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Qualifications achieved	10 x CPI	41 x CPI 9 x CAFF	56 x CPI 29 x CAFF	62 x CPI 54 x CPIO	64 x CPI 68 x CPIO 49 x CAFF

Most interviewees explained that programme participants develop the necessary skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience to make them ready for work. For instance, host farmers confirmed that programme participants develop skills that position them well to secure employment. One farm host commented their programme participant could “*walk into a role as a herd manager quite easily*” after their involvement in the Growing Future Farmers programme. The Growing Future Farmers programme supports participants to build a strong knowledge base that could be applied when working on farms such as health and safety, developing a good work ethic and positive mindset, and having more confidence and trust in themselves to undertake tasks on farms independently.

In addition, work readiness was supported through programme participants developing an awareness of the wide range of roles and opportunities for progression within the agribusiness sector. Most interviewees noted that participants had identified their goals and were pursuing their areas of interest. This gave participants a sense of direction, helped them develop the necessary skills and find roles that suited them. One programme participant explained that that “*I want to do AI (Artificial Insemination) ...then I want to travel... before coming home.*” Other examples included programme participants moving on to a junior shepherd or head shepherd role on completion of the Growing Future Farmers programme, starting their own business and/or expressing aspirations to manage large farms in the future.

There is some evidence to suggest that programme participants are helping fill workforce needs, with the Growing Future Farmers programme contributing to making it easier for the agriculture sector to recruit new entrants with an appropriate skillset. Host farmers that were interviewed described how they often employed participants upon programme completion because they were in a position to gain a skilled and trained worker who was familiar with their farm environment. Further, one employer commented that while they would previously have relied on reference checks when looking to recruit new workers, they trusted the integrity of the Growing Future Farmers programme and had confidence in employing graduates because they had observed how graduates have a range of skills, training and experience behind them. They considered this more beneficial than reference checks, which did not always provide a complete picture of a prospective candidate’s ability and potential.

2.1.3.2 Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme

Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme administrative data shows that all programme participants transition into secure sustainable employment, with five participants also pursuing further training. While 77 out of 98 participants (approximately 79%) enrolled in total from 2020 to 2024 are reported to have successfully completed the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme. Participants who did not complete the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme are reported to have still transitioned into employment.

Table 7 below shows the number of participants that attained NZ Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems - Dairy, Sheep or Beef Finishing strand) (Level 3) or NZ Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3) or NZ Certificate in Agriculture (Dairy, Breeding, or Non-Breeding strand) (Level 4) between 2020 to 2024. This data reflects a consistently high rate of achievement, with 58 out of 98 programme participants (approximately 60%) since the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme inception attaining Level 3 in either NZ Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) or NZ Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (PIOS), 19 of whom progressed on to a second year within the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme and successfully attained NZ Certificate in Agriculture Level 4.

Table 7: Number of participants who achieved a qualification

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Qualifications achieved	6 x Level 3	13 x Level 3 3 x Level 4	10 x Level 3 5 x Level 4	14 x Level 3 7 x Level 4	15 x Level 3 4 x Level 4

Interviews with programme partners and host farmers indicated that farmers need workers who have the necessary skills and can fit into the farm work environment. Indications are the farming industry is facing challenges with finding suitably skilled and trained staff.¹⁶ However, farmers do not have time or capacity to train young people. Most interviewees considered this type of programme was needed, especially with a regional focus. One farm host explained that *“farming in Northland is really different and having them learn to farm here is really good. Hard to attract good people to Northland.”* The Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme was seen as helping fill this gap by equipping participants with sector-relevant skills and knowledge that covers both theory and practical skills. These skills were developed through providing a supportive environment and incremental progression of on-farm tasks to match participants’ skillset development.

Some host farmers commented there was an initial investment of time and patience to ensure participants became suitably familiar with a given task, but that this paid off as the abilities of participants improved over time. One host farmer described how the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme encourages host farmers to build participants’ skills by giving them more challenging tasks and encouraging participants to attempt different types of tasks. Most interviewees, including delivery staff, programme partners, farm hosts and programme participants, felt the current structure of the earn-as-you-learn model was important as it enables participants to be compensated for their labour.

Work readiness was enhanced through helping participants identify their career aspirations and/or next steps. This included exposing participants to a range of opportunities in the farming sector, as well as supporting them to explore their own potential and develop their abilities. Host farmers that were interviewed noted these aspirations do not always align with local employment gaps with participants moving to other areas as a result. That said, there is some evidence the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme has contributed to increasing the pool of local talent with sector-relevant

¹⁶ Whangarei Agricultural & Pastoral Society. (n.d.). Farm Intern Programme – Summary, Results, Testimonials, p. 3

knowledge and technical skills who understand the location-specific requirements of farming in Te Tai Tokerau.

While some host farmers sought to retain participants on completion of the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme if they had sufficient capacity, reasons cited by participants and host farmers for moving on included limited capacity on host farms to retain participants post-programme, lack of development opportunities or a desire to pursue another pathway. Some participants moved into senior farming roles either in Te Tai Tokerau, other locations in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas.

Interviews with delivery staff and participants indicates the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme is successful in setting up participants to gain meaningful employment and earn a higher income than they would likely have earned otherwise. Feedback included some participants speculating that without the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme they might be working in a supermarket or be still at school even though they did not like it. All of the participants interviewed indicated that without the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme they would not be in farming and said they would recommend the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme to others.

2.1.3.3 The Generation Programme

The Generation Programme administrative data shows that 82 out of 142 participants (approximately 58%) between 2018 and 2023 gained employment in forestry and remained with their employer for more than three months. An additional 24 participants (approximately 17%) gained employment outside forestry in allied primary sector industries such as farming, horticulture and arboriculture, and similarly remained with their employer.

Table 8 below shows the total number of programme participants (86 out of 142, approximately 61%) from the 2018 to 2023 cohorts that successfully gained qualifications through the Generation Programme. Given the impact of Covid-19 and the challenges many of the young people face, this data reflects a consistently high rate of achievement.

Table 8: Number of participants who achieved a qualification

Qualifications achieved	Total number
NCEA with Vocational Pathways Level 2	13
NZ Certificate in Forest Industry Foundation Skills Level 2	22
NZ Certificate in Forestry Operations Level 3	9
NZ Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations Level 3	32
NZ Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills Level 3	10

Administrative data and most interviews indicate the Generation Programme enables participants to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to secure and sustain employment, particularly in forestry. This includes ensuring participants have the necessary physical fitness and

practical skills to work in forestry. One employer described how the Generation Programme supports participants to develop a wide knowledge based and skillset to become work ready. This included learning to wake up early in the morning to start the workday and understanding health and safety. These basics were important for contractors and employers who employ participants post-programme as they want to focus on training them in specific job requirements, rather than spending time on basic professional and forestry skills. In addition, one past participant reflected on how the skills they gained during the Generation Programme are helping them complete different work activities such as silviculture, roadmaking, harvesting, using chainsaws and operating machinery.

Programme administrative data points to the range of employment opportunities available to participants, including some that came about as sector recovery measures after disastrous weather events, such as the reintroduction of Taskforce Green (a disaster recovery employment support that assists communities with clean-up activities), and COVID-19, such as Jobs for Nature (a nature-based employment programme that helps to revitalise communities and stimulate the economy post COVID-19). More recently, there have been employment opportunities focused on recovery work from Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle that hit Te Tairāwhiti in 2023. However, these disruptions to the forestry sector also resulted in negative impacts on workforce development, with 36 participants out of 142 (approximately 25%) ending up becoming a NEET post-programme between 2018 and 2023.

Work readiness was also supported through helping participants identify and pursue their chosen career path. This included supporting participants to develop their interest areas through specifically tailored opportunities, providing pathways that aligned with their goals such as exploring career progression options and supporting participants to follow them. One programme participant noted *“The programme helps to see the opportunities, they ask us what we want to do at the start of the course, then they focus on trying to give you the experience and skills/quals that you need to be able to do that.”* Examples of participant career development included moving from an entry-level role into contracting in forestry and completing further training to operate different machinery, while another participant post-programme had gone onto start their own business. Getting started was potentially more difficult for female participants with a suggestion that contractors may prefer male workers rather than female workers due to greater physical strength. One female worker believed this was the reason why they were unable to enter employment immediately post-programme, but eventually managed to secure a job six months later.

The Generation Programme also actively promotes higher-level learning and gaining theoretical knowledge. Delivery staff commented that some participants had discussed undertaking a university degree post-programme when they had not previously considered further learning. In addition, three participants who completed the Generation Programme are now pursuing the Whakatipuranga Ngahere, New Zealand Diploma in Forest Management Level 6 and expected to graduate with this qualification in March 2025. A further three participants have indicated they will enrol in this diploma in 2025.

There was some evidence to indicate that participants are well-positioned to secure roles with more responsibility and higher pay, enabling them to meet their personal needs such as purchasing a home or financially supporting their whānau. Feedback indicated that without the Generation Programme there was a high likelihood that some participants would have become either unemployed or been in minimum wage employment. In line with improved employment opportunities, one delivery staff

member indicated some participants come from other full-time employment looking to obtain long-term sustainable work that offered better rates.

2.1.3.4 The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme

There is some evidence the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme supports programme participants to develop a range of skills that will enable them to secure employment in forestry or other primary industries after completing the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. Findings from the five interviews¹⁷ indicates the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme facilitates the development of foundational skills, such as health and safety, and employment related skills, such as interpersonal communication, which programme participants can use to gain employment.

All five interviewees suggested that demand from the forestry industry for programme participants who had completed the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme exceeded supply. One programme provider mentioned *“I have a list of 20/30 industry contractors. Always asking for students. Don’t have enough students to fill demand.”* Delivery staff commented that while some programme participants choose to work in the forestry after the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, others choose to work in the broader primary sector or train in different industries such as construction. However, there was limited evidence available related to actual employment outcomes in terms of the number of programme participants that secure employment and the types of work. Administrative data indicated that three programme participants had pursued an apprenticeship in silviculture and have since achieved an associated qualification.

In addition, administrative data and interviews with delivery staff indicate the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme supports programme participants to engage in further education or training after completing the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. Between 2019 and 2024, indications are that all the programme participants who participated in the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme successfully completed it and achieved their respective NCEA Level 2 or 3 qualifications. As there is high demand for the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, some programme participants temporarily replace others if they have to take a short break for various personal reasons. In some instances, this short ‘taster’ is all the individual needs to get the necessary work-related skills to gain employment.

Table 9 on the following page shows all 54 programme participants from the 2019 to 2024 cohorts successfully gained their NCEA Level 2 and/or Level 3 Unit Standards the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. This data reflects a high success rate as participants complete the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme.

¹⁷ Five interviewees include two delivery staff and three programme partners.

Table 9: Number of participants who achieved unit standards

Unit standards achieved	Total programme participants who achieved their NCEA Level 2 and/or Level 3	Total programme participants enrolled
NCEA Level 2 and/ or Level 3	54	54

The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme also aspires to improve work readiness through encouraging programme participants to explore their capabilities, providing weekly career planning sessions with an external provider and field trips to visit different forestry businesses. These activities were considered to benefit programme participants by helping them to think about their future and open them up to new possibilities. However, there is insufficient evidence available to determine to what extent the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme successfully enables young people to identify their career aspirations, and/or develop an understanding of the range of forestry opportunities available. One delivery staff member said that one constraint was that had limited knowledge and capacity to show programme participants all the available pathways into forestry, noting there was a lack of information available to support their efforts.

If at the end of the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme participants are unsure about their next steps or wish to gain additional practical experience before entering the workforce, delivery staff reported the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme provides programme participants with the option to return the following year.

2.1.3.5 Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme

While there is information about the number of programme participants who graduated from Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, it is not clear how many programme participants have secured work in forestry. The Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship administrative data available indicates that 14 out of 17 (approximately 80%) of programme participants who graduated with a BE(Hons) or BForSc, including programme participants who graduated in 2024, have gone on to work in forestry in Aotearoa New Zealand on completion of their tertiary studies. However, it is early days with the first programme participants only graduating in 2023.

Table 10 (over the page) shows a year-on-year breakdown of the number of participants that gained a Bachelor of Forestry Science (BFS), Bachelor of Engineering (Forestry) (BE), or Diploma of Forestry Management (DFM) between 2019 to 2023. Out of the 40 programme participants who gained the Scholarship between 2019 and 2023, 22 (55%) completed a BForS, seven (approximately 17%) completed a BE, and four (10%) completed a DFM (10%), and six (15%) withdrew from the Scholarship for various personal reasons. One changed degree after receiving the Scholarship but was still eligible for the Scholarship as they completed a Bachelor of Science/ Bachelor of Environmental Science (BSc). Overall, this indicates Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme results in a high rate of achievement, which is to be expected as the Scholarship covers a substantial amount of university course fees and provides paid work experience.

Table 10: Number of participants who achieved a qualification

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Qualifications achieved	5 x BFS 2 x BE	4 x BFS 1 x BE	6 x BFS 1 x BE 1 x BSc	3 x BFS 2 x DFM	4 x BFS 3 x BE 2 x DFM

Evidence from interviews with participants and industry hosts indicated that a key benefit of the Scholarship were the internships, which helped programme participants both meet the practical work requirements of their degrees and provided useful forestry work experience. Industry hosts that were interviewed described attempting to provide a range of work experiences that were useful both for their business and for the participants. Internship opportunities included working for MPI or a variety of forestry businesses that could involve research or fieldwork. Programme participant interviewees viewed the internships as providing a positive learning experience, opportunities to build networks in the forestry sector, and in some cases led to work opportunities. One past participant described the internship as *“one of the most beneficial parts of the programme.”* Further, survey responses found that nine out of ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed they had gained useful forestry experience and eight out of ten felt able to look for work in forestry.

Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme also aspired to support programme participants to identify their career aspirations with mixed results. While some programme participants described becoming clear about what they wanted to do, others were not, although their focus was within forestry. This in part potentially reflects their age and stage of life as young people just starting to work. One interviewee described it as too soon to be sure what they wanted to specialise in. They mentioned they were *“keen to try a few roles, get a broad base of knowledge while starting out then maybe think about specialising.”*

2.1.4 Almost all of the programmes deliver broader benefits

2.1.4.1 Programmes contribute to improved well-being in participants

Interview evidence from the Growing Future Farmers programme, Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, and the Generation Programme indicated these programmes delivery a range of intangible benefits for participants. These included participants developing improved self-confidence, self-esteem and work ethic. Limited evidence for the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme suggests similar benefits are being realised. These broader benefits are important as these benefits contribute to them successfully completing their respective programmes and helping prepare them for the workforce.

These four vocational programmes also appear to support young people with their mental health, build peer relationships and develop their social skills. For example, most Growing Future Farmers programme interviewees believed the Growing Future Farmers programme supported participants to develop a good work ethic and positive mindset, leading to participants having improved confidence and trust in themselves. One programme participant affirmed that over the Growing Future Farmers programme they saw *“my confidence grow... I could figure it out. Back myself [and feel] confident in*

what I was doing." In some instances, the shift in participants appeared to be significant with them displaying enhanced social skills, attitude towards others and respect for themselves on completion of the Growing Future Farmers programme. One Growing Future Farmers programme partner attributed this to the supportive learning environment offered to programme participants, which they were unlikely to experience if solely in a classroom-based setting. This interviewee suggested these intangible benefits contributed to the high-quality and standard of young people that moved on from the Growing Future Farmers programme into employment.

For Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, interview evidence suggests that participants' well-being and confidence improves as a result of participating in the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme. For example, one host farmer reflected how one of the participants had initially been quite shy but at graduation was able to give a speech and had developed personal confidence more broadly. Moreover, the well-being of participants was regularly monitored using the SaferMe app.¹⁸ Most interviewees commented on the speed at which additional support was provided when issues or risks arose with participants, enabling them to remain employed on the farm and mentally well. One programme participant mentioned there was *"no time that I felt like I needed support and didn't have access to it."* Further, Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme participants stated the camps and weekly training sessions had enabled them to develop supportive relationships with their peers.

Interviews indicated the Generation Programme contributes to young people's sense of identity, knowledge of their cultural heritage and enhanced connection with their whānau and communities. This was fostered by the Generation Programme's holistic approach to well-being underpinned by the Te Whare Tapa Whā model with the four pou: te taha hinengaro (mental and emotional well-being), te taha tinana (physical well-being), te taha wairua (spiritual well-being), and te taha whānau (family and social well-being).¹⁹ One delivery staff member noted they *"thread culturally conscious ways into our programme."*

For Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, these benefits are not realised in the same way because the cohort of participants is different. In particular, they are more likely to do well generally. However, some intangible benefits included supporting participants to complete their course such as providing additional support and the ability to work through different options with the Scholarship Coordinator. For example, one participant decided to take a gap year, while another decided to study ecology at Otago University instead. An additional benefit of the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme is that participants form a cohort within the University of Canterbury's School of Forestry and are monitored both academically and in a personal sense.

2.1.4.2 Participation in the programmes can lead to benefits for host employers

For the Growing Future Farmers programme, interviews with host farmers and delivery staff indicates host farmers gain benefits in terms of improving workplace safety, farming standards and farming work culture. These benefits emerge from the training farm hosts receive and the insights gained from

¹⁸ SaferMe is a safety software business that sponsor the use of a reporting app to both farm hosts and Whangarei A&P Society.

¹⁹ Durie, M. H. (1984). "Te taha hinengaro": An integrated approach to mental health. *Community Mental Health in New Zealand*, 1(1), 4–11.

mentoring programme participants on their farm. One host farmer specified that hosting an intern *“empower[s] team members to step up and be their best while creating a culture of responsibility and performance of senior team members as role models.”*

In addition, these interviewees stated that hosting participants was a rewarding and worthwhile experience for the host farmers, their farm whānau and team. This is an important benefit of the Growing Future Farmers programme, given that working in the farming sector can be an isolating and/or stressful job for its workforce, with potentially negative impacts on mental well-being. Delivery staff described how host farmers and farm teams have improved communication and leadership skills, given the need to nurture a young person in a new environment. They also considered that host farmers benefited from gaining a sense of community, as they automatically become part of the national Growing Future Farmers programme network through their involvement in the programme.

Interview evidence from the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme host farmers suggested that host farmers generally have a progressive approach when hosting programme participants, including trusting them to carry out tasks and solve problems by themselves over time. A benefit for the host farmers was they were able to share responsibilities and workload on farms.

For the Generation Programme, there is some evidence the Generation Programme is delivering benefits for local forestry employers through improving access to safe and qualified new entrants to the industry. One forestry employer commented they had employed many participants after completing the Generation Programme over the years with the knowledge that participants had appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to a safe and successful operation. Interviews with delivery staff also suggests participants gained access to local work, potentially benefiting forest estates by being able to care for the whenua and work on the land.

While the benefits to industry hosts that participated in the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme was more limited, some hosts commented they received a quality intern willing and able to support tasks, with minimal financial investment required. However, a potential challenge for some industry hosts is that most of their work occurred in the middle of the year, and as a result they found it difficult to fully utilise programme participants during their internships, which take place over the summer study break.

2.2 Viability of the programmes

2.2.1 Summary

All programmes stated they experience ongoing high demand from potential participants. In addition, the four vocational programmes reported that demand from employers within farming and forestry was increasing.²⁰

Indications are these four vocational programmes successfully provide an accessible pathway into farming or forestry. Many of the young people participating in these vocational programmes

²⁰ The first cohort of Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship recipients graduated in 2023, meaning that insufficient time has elapsed to assess employer demand for graduates.

(particularly the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme) come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have not thrived at school, and need additional academic support. These programmes provide these young people with an opportunity to develop the necessary skills to gain meaningful employment they may not have been able to otherwise.

The fifth programme, the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, has contributed to greater diversity and more enrolments in forestry degrees at the University of Canterbury. Indications are the internship component of this scholarship also contributed to recipients becoming work ready through providing them with work experience in forestry.

2.2.2 There is high demand from potential participants for these programmes

Programme administrative data shows the programmes have a relatively steady flow of participants. In some instances, such as the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, and the Generation Programme, the limitation placed on participant numbers is a result of the design and type of these programmes with a fixed number of places available. For example, both the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and the Generation Programme take a consistent number of participants each year. Since 2018 the Generation Programme has consistently had three intakes of ten per year. Similarly, since 2019, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme has generally had eight participants per year, with two exceptions when 11 participated.

Administrative data shows that 18 scholarships were intended to be awarded for Bachelor of Forestry Science and Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Forest Engineering across 2019, 2020 and 2021, but 22 scholarships were awarded over these three years. The additional four scholarships were added because of the quality of applications received. Further, following a Business Case in 2020, the Diploma of Forestry Management from Te Ohomai Institute of Technology was added, with a total of nine scholarships (three per course) available per year until the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme closed in 2023.

Overall, the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme received a total of 108 applicants over five years, and awarded 40 scholarships. **Table 11** (on the following page) shows the number of scholarships awarded for a Bachelor of Forestry Science (BForSc), Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) (BE(Hons)) in Forest Engineering, or a Diploma of Forest Management between 2019 and 2023.

Table 11: Number of scholarships awarded

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Scholarship applications received	16 applications	25 applications	21 applications	18 applications	28 applications	108 applications
Scholarships awarded	5 x BForSc 3 x BE(Hons)	5 x BForSc 1 x BE(Hons)	8 x BForSc ²¹ 1 x BE(Hons)	3 x BForSc 3 x BE(Hons) 2 x Diploma	3 x BForSc 4 x BE(Hons) 2 x Diploma	40 scholarships awarded 24 BForSc 12 BE (Hons) 4 x Diploma

In 2020 (its first year) the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme had the smallest number of programme participants with 14. In subsequent years the number of programme participants has fluctuated between 17 and 24.²² Similarly, the Growing Future Farmers programme first two years were pilots with ten people participating in the regional pilot in 2020, and a further 48 participating in the national pilot in 2021. In subsequent years the number of participants has also steadily grown.

Table 12 below shows the total number of participants that have been enrolled in each programme.

Table 12: Number of programme participants by year

Programme participants by year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Growing Future Farmers	-	-	10	58	91	103	131
Whangarei A&P Farm Internship	-	-	14	21	17	22	24
The Generation Programme	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways	-	8	8	11	8	8	11
Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship	-	8	6	9	8	9	-

Evidence drawn from interviews with delivery staff indicate that most of these programmes have greater demand from young people wanting to participate than places available. For example, delivery staff from Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Growing Future Farmers programme, the

²¹ Please note, as mentioned earlier, one participant changed degree after receiving the Scholarship but was still eligible for the Scholarship as they completed a Bachelor of Science/ Bachelor of Environmental Science (BSc).

²² While the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme does not have an explicit target, places available on the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme is subject to farm host availability, classroom resourcing, and tutor capacity.

Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme all reported that demand for places on the respective programme exceeded availability, resulting in some young people missing out.

For the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme and the Growing Future Farmers programme, delivery staff reported that a limiting factor in expanding the number of places available was finding a sufficient number of suitable host farms. Delivery staff talked about the importance of building relationships with farmers, and finding farmers who can provide safe working environments for young people who are often school leavers. Typically, they found there were more candidates keen to join their programme than farms and farmers able to host them.

The Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme and the Growing Future Farmers programme used different approaches to finding farmers and ensuring working environments were safe. For the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, delivery staff reported that finding host farmers was dependent on the Farm Programme Coordinator having extensive networks across Te Tai Tokerau. Further, they described their approach as involving significant time to establish and maintain networks, including providing information to potential host farmers and waiting for responses. They commented that a range of methods were used to find and bring good host farmers into the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, including word-of-mouth, door-knocking, cold-calling, text communication and meeting with groups such as DairyNZ. Although the Growing Future Farmers programme also relied on relationships within farming, their approach to sourcing, vetting and selecting appropriate host farmers involved organising training for host farmers.

These differences are potentially in part due to the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme being regionally based and the Growing Future Farmers programme being nationally based.

2.2.3 Demand from potential employers appears to be increasing

Interview evidence from delivery staff, host farms and broader key stakeholders indicate there is ongoing demand from employers for programme participants. The evaluation found evidence that employers viewed these programmes as contributing to a workforce that is both ‘work ready’ and ‘ready for work’. For example, farmers interviewed considered that on completion of the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme and the Growing Future Farmers programme, graduates had developed the necessary skills to work on farms. In addition, the interviews with programme staff, hosts and participants reflected that that employers value the skills that programme participants have developed and their strong knowledge base in areas such as health and safety. Further, the four vocational programmes (the Growing Future Farmers programme, the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme) promoted the development of a strong working ethic and work-related life skills such as punctuality, reliability, and confidence to complete tasks as requested by an employer.

The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, the Generation Programme, and the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme reported growing demand from employers and recognition that programme graduates are well trained. For example, the Generation Programme was experiencing increasing demand from local forestry operators looking for young people with the necessary skills. Both programme delivery staff and one host employer commented that programme

participants came equipped with the right skills and knowledge and willingness to work. As a result, various forestry contractors across Tairāwhiti were choosing to employ programme graduates. The Generation Programme was viewed by one employer as helping develop a forestry workforce pipeline which was valuable as they found it challenging to find appropriately skilled and suitably qualified workers. Further, in December 2024, delivery staff stated they were experiencing increasing demand for programme graduates via direct approaches from employers. Demand for programme participants was not limited to forestry as the skills were transferable to working across the primary sector.

2.2.4 Programmes provide an accessible alternative pathway for young people to enter farming or forestry

Evidence indicates these programmes provided young people with a pathway into forestry or farming. In particular, the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme provided accessible alternative pathways for young people to enter these sectors who may not have been able to otherwise. For some young people, this will change the trajectory of their lives as the alternative option for them were minimum wage jobs; and some were at risk of becoming a NEET. In addition, the Generation Programme also develops their sense of identity, which is particularly important for Pasifika and Māori. They leave the Generation Programme with a grounded sense of who they are and where they come from. The aforementioned three programmes, along with the Growing Future Farmers programme, provided a practice-based approach, which helped ensure programme participants developed the necessary skills to become work ready.

The administrative data for the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme showed the scholarship led to more Māori and people who identify as female enrolling in forestry degrees at the University of Canterbury. In addition to receiving financial support through the scholarship, recipients also gained work experience through their summer internships. Interview evidence indicates these internships helped recipients gain work experience that contributed to becoming work ready.

Below is more information about the pathways that each of the programmes provide.

2.2.4.1 The Growing Future Farmers programme

There was no administrative data available about the backgrounds of participants before joining the Growing Future Farmers programme. Interviews with the Growing Future Farmers programme delivery staff indicated the majority of programme participants were school leavers, mostly from Year 12 with a small minority of participants having worked elsewhere first before finding the Growing Future Farmers programme. Further, they estimated that approximately 60% of participants come from a rural community with links to farms or farming families and approximately 40% come from urban backgrounds with no linkages to farms.

All three programme participants interviewed considered the Growing Future Farmers programme enabled greater access to farming by creating opportunities for those from an urban background to enter farming. Comments included that it was a “*good door opener for those from urban living*” and a “*good position for me as a townie*”. Further, delivery staff considered the Growing Future Farmers

programme availability to be particularly meaningful for many participants who are kinaesthetic, practical learners and can find academics or mainstream school environments challenging.

However, feedback from all three programme participants suggests that some of the selection criteria may act as a barrier for some young people. These barriers included needing to have the requisite level of numeracy and literacy, preferably NCEA Level 2, and the need to financially sustain oneself. These interviewees reported that financial challenges included receiving a weekly living allowance of \$200 per week, which did not sufficiently cover living costs, and the requirement for participants to purchase their own equipment. to the Growing Future Farmers programme participants noted that this was particularly challenging for those coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, although participants can get a Student Loan to cover costs.

One host farmer and one programme participant commented on the potential difficulties some participants encountered due to needing to cover travel costs, such as petrol, out of their own pocket to attend training that may be a significant distance from the farm. Feedback from participants indicated that without some savings and/or family financial support they would be unable to participate in the Growing Future Farmers programme. Their experience of living on the allowance was challenging, and they considered that financial arrangements were not entirely fair, leaving them feel undervalued because they were not paid, not even a training wage. At the same time participants acknowledged the total programme participant package included fully paid accommodation, power, Wi-Fi for two years, and the provision of meat.

2.2.4.2 Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme

The Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme administrative data shows the majority of participants come directly from school with 61 out of a total of 95 participants being school leavers. The data shows other participants come from a mix of already working on a farm but seeking a qualification or in other employment. Delivery staff indicated that approximately 60-65% of participants are female and many participants joining the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme were at risk of becoming a NEET. The only criterion for joining the Whangarei A&P Farm Intern Programme was an interest in farming.

The accessibility of the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme was further enhanced through building strong relationships with schools in Te Tai Tokerau and promoting the Farm Internship programme through an annual career roadshow. Visiting the schools enabled delivery staff to identify and to start building relationships with young people interested in farming. Some of these young people were not thriving at school and/or needed additional academic support. A Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme report described this as *“sometimes picking up learners who have disengaged from the compulsory education system”*.²³ Delivery staff estimated that 60-70% of participants needed academic support, with approximately 50% having dyslexia including 10% being significantly impacted by this. A tutor explained providing support was important for enabling participants with learning difficulties to participate in the academic aspects of the Whangarei A&P

²³ Whangarei Agricultural & Pastoral Society. (n.d.). Farm Intern Programme – Summary, Results, Testimonials, p. 1

Farm Internship programme. Similarly, one-to-one support was provided for participants that were not developing their practical skills quickly enough on farms, enabling them to remain employed on the farm.

Paid employment made joining the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme more accessible, reducing the risk of participants experiencing financial hardship, especially young people coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Participants, host farmers, delivery staff and key stakeholders viewed the earn-as-you-learn model as an important factor in making the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme attractive and accessible. All the participants that were interviewed cited earning an income as one of the deciding factors in joining the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme.

2.2.4.3 The Generation Programme

A 2024 the Generation Programme Quarterly Report notes that 80% of participants are Māori, with a focus on 15-24-year-olds that are local to the region.²⁴ Participants come from a range of prior activities including school, unemployment, full-time employment and/or may be referred by the Ministry of Justice or MSD.²⁵ The Generation Programme has minimal entry requirements with applicants needing to be physically fit and prepared to be drug free.

Accessibility of the Generation Programme is enhanced through the ongoing practice of manaaki, which involves a holistic approach to well-being of participants while on the Generation Programme and for up to two years post-programme. This support included academic support, developing physical fitness to be work ready, spiritual well-being and support with personal issues that could act as a barrier to completing the Generation Programme and future employment. Feedback from participants included that delivery staff were “*super attentive*” and “*very understanding of our lives,*” making completing the Generation Programme easier as they felt supported and seen.

2.2.4.4 The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme

Three interviewees indicated the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme provided an alternative educational pathway for young people who were disengaged at school, kinaesthetic learners, and required individualised support. In addition, programme participants needed to have either an interest in forestry or be open to exploring it as a vocational pathway. These interviewees considered the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme catered for programme participants who have poor school attendance and were at a higher risk of becoming a NEET. They indicated that programme participants remained engaged throughout the year in learning foundational forestry skills.

One interviewee explained that although the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme was open to programme participants living in Otago, it primarily serves programme participants attending secondary schools in Milton, Waihoia, Taieri, Mosgiel, and Dunedin. Schools in these areas identified programme participants who would benefit from the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways

²⁴ Tūranga Ararau. (2024). Generation Programme Quarterly Report (September 2024), p. 2

²⁵ Tūranga Ararau. (n.d.). Māori Trades and Training Fund Application, p. 23

programme with potential participants interviewed and assessed for their suitability by Tokomairiro High School and The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. Attending the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme was made accessible through the provision of transport for programme participants and the necessary academic and emotional support to enable programme participants to complete the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, including passing their academic studies. One delivery staff member explained that programme participants who stopped attending were followed up with a view to addressing any barriers that could prevent completion.

2.2.4.5 Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme

Survey responses and findings from an evaluation completed in 2023 shows for approximately 80% of programme participants, the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme was or might have been a deciding factor in studying forestry.

Administrative data indicates the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme contributed to making studying forestry more accessible and/or attractive to its target population, with the numbers of Māori and people who identify as female increasing. This increase is also confirmed by a 2023 evaluation which found the number of Māori studying forestry at the University of Canterbury since the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme was introduced in 2019 had increased from ten to 28 programme participants in 2023.²⁶ Similarly the total number of people identifying as female studying forestry at the University of Canterbury had increased from 28 to 53 programme participants; 21 of these programme participants were Scholarship recipients. Although there are indications that some of those that received a scholarship did not need the financial support, for other programme participants indications it enabled them to study at a tertiary level. Feedback included *“my parents didn’t contribute to my studies... I was lucky that I got a scholarship instead.”*

The increase in Māori and people identifying as female studying forestry could in part be due to the promotion and publicity associated with the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme increasing visibility of forestry as a career option. Interviews with forestry businesses, the School of Forestry at the University of Canterbury and MPI indicated an unexpected benefit of the scholarship with promotion and publicity of forestry was a general increase in the number of applications. Early indications are the scholarships ceasing has led to a decrease in the number of applications to study forestry.

2.2.5 Short funding cycles creates challenges for programmes’ long-term sustainability

A key challenge to these programmes’ continued sustainability is short funding cycles with a lack of suitable longer-term funding options. A contributing factor to this situation is they do not fit neatly into typical tertiary education or training. For example, the placements are not recognised as apprenticeships and the level of pastoral care sits outside the bounds of what would be provided at a

²⁶ Te Uru Rākau. (2023). Overview of the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Forestry Scholarship Programme 2018-2023, p. 2

polytechnic or university. This means the programmes cannot access longer-term funding associated with tertiary education providers and/or apprenticeship-related funding. For instance, MSD offers support and training for job candidates via schemes such as Flexi-wage, Apprenticeship Boost, Mana in Mahi, and Skills for Industry. However, programmes such as Whangarei A&P Farm Internship and Growing Future Farmers are primarily designed for school leavers. The precarious nature of these programmes is reflected in Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme, which ceased to be offered in 2023 due to no further government funding.

An impact of the lack of long-term funding for these programmes is that they are reliant on sourcing funding from whatever sources they can find. This makes planning for growth and expanding these programmes very difficult. For example, for the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme funding was initially received from the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF). In addition, funding/support has also needed to be cobbled together from local businesses such as Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Federated Farmers, Hine Rangi Trust and a range of organisations who donate clothing and/or footwear as required. With the PGF funding coming to an end, the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship Programme will receive funding through MSD in 2025. However, delivery staff commented that funding from MSD had implications for the types of young people that could participate in the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme as a range of criteria needed to be met, such as jobseekers experiencing difficulties finding employment. Relying on this type of funding could fundamentally change the focus of the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme away from serving school leavers to NEETs and/or longer-term unemployed. Further, the MSD funding only covers the first year of the programme which could limit opportunities for people to complete the second year and achieve NZ Certificate in Agriculture (Dairy, Breeding, or Non-Breeding strand), Level 4.

This issue of short-term funding also applies to the other programmes, which regularly invest time and effort into finding new funding sources. With limited available capacity, it can mean that resources are diverted on a regular basis from programme delivery to efforts to source funding. For instance, one of the delivery staff for Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme regularly engaged in sourcing funding to ensure the continuation of their programme. Delivery staff indicated that demand for placements exceeded supply, but they could not invest in the necessary resources to meet that demand due to insufficient funding. Over the years, sources of funding for the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme included a mix of government funds (e.g. MPI, PGF), industry, and Otago Community Trust with funding coming predominantly from industry. Sources have included funding for one year from MPI, PGF, and an Otago secondary school.

2.2.6 Some programmes are potentially vulnerable due to limited workforce capacity of operations

In some programmes, including the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme and the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship, the programme workforce is very small, with each relying on two key staff members. This creates vulnerabilities for the programmes as it makes it difficult to engage in workforce continuity. While the individuals involved displayed high levels of commitment and appeared passionate about their work, if one of these individuals was to leave or fall sick, the programme could be jeopardised. In part, this is due to the fact there are distinct roles in the teams of two staff members, with one individual overseeing functions such as administration and funding,

while the other has deep networks in local farming or forestry businesses. Delivery staff explained that a lack of secure funding means they are unable to employ more people and grow the programmes. For the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, an additional limiting factor was the ability to find a sufficient number of host farmers, especially during economic downturns.

However, to some extent these risks are mitigated through these programmes drawing on broader networks that support ongoing and successful programme delivery. For example, the tutor from the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme reported sometimes receiving support from teachers and/or other tutors from the local high school. Similarly, the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme works closely with Land Based Training who provide tutors, training material, NZQA accreditation and pastoral care.

The risks for larger programmes such as the Generation Programme and the Growing Future Farmers programme do not exist to the same extent as more people are involved in their delivery. For example, while Tūranga Ararau has around 40 staff in total across their organisation, there are four roles dedicated to delivery of the Generation Programme: Generation Programme Manager, a Forestry Training Manager/Tutor/Trainer-Assessor and two Forestry Trainers/Assessors. This means the risk of relying on a few key staff members is diminished and there is a wider pool of organisation-wide staff to draw upon if programme capability and/or capacity requirements change. In addition, the Generation Programme works with industry trainers who provide additional support for staff and those needing training and assessing, as well as kaumātua who provide pastoral care, support and guidance. Although the Eastland Wood Council – who used to deliver the manaaki support and training, as well as awarding industry qualifications – have exited from the Generation Programme, they continue to actively support the Generation Programme in areas such as advocacy and governance and remain a key industry partner.

The Growing Future Farmers programme has a mixture of their own staff and a range of stakeholders who support delivery of the Growing Future Farmers programme. These stakeholders include for instance, the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) who deliver the NZQA New Zealand certificate qualifications and organisations such as Training Ventures who deliver training. The Growing Future Farmers programme staff includes Student Success Advisors. Student Success Advisors (previously called Liaison Managers) play a critical role in helping both programme participants and farmers stay on track, including providing pastoral care and support for geographically dispersed and sometimes isolated participants. However, the evidence suggests that this nationwide scale of operations can bring challenges and risks associated with maintaining consistency and quality of service delivery, particularly provision of pastoral care, across the 14 different regions that Student Success Advisors are responsible for covering.

2.3 Provision of pastoral care ranged from ‘Acceptable’ to ‘Excellent’ when benchmarked against the Rubric

Pastoral care is a critical component of the programmes and focuses on providing well-being and learning support for participants to successfully complete their programme and become work ready. For three programmes – Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme and Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme – a key component of the pastoral care

involved supporting young people who faced a range of challenges. Many of these participants had not achieved educational success prior to their enrolment in the programmes. For the Growing Future Farmers programme, most of the participants had achieved some degree of educational success before joining the Growing Future Farmers programme. This SROI evaluation found that for all programmes the pastoral care significantly contributed to programme participants ability to complete their respective programme. Although most programmes had some participants leave the Growing Future Farmers programme prematurely, this number was consistently small.

Although the quality of pastoral care varied across the programmes, all placed importance on building strong relationships with programme participants and encouraging the development of peer support. For the Generation Programme this also included involving whānau and kaumātua. The evidence indicates that pastoral care was highly valued by participants, host farmers and forestry businesses. When assessed against the Rubric, pastoral care that was considered to be **Excellent** involved highly responsive support, well established systems, and post-Programme tracking of participants. Excellent programmes provided bespoke, holistic support that met the academic, cultural, and emotional needs of programme participants.

All of the programmes relied on face-to-face engagement as a key mode for delivering pastoral care. The evidence indicates that this approach was crucial for positively engaging with participants and providing good quality support. Feedback indicated that programmes that had either insufficient or variable levels of face-to-face engagement were viewed as having a negative effect on the quality of pastoral care provided. One of the benefits of face-to-face engagement was that it supported the development of relationships, increasing the likelihood and comfort of programme participants to request support when and if needed. Most programme participants are aware of the support available and that stakeholders such as host farmers or employers, or training partners take an active role in contributing to and/or utilising the pastoral care available.

While pastoral care investment is intensive, particularly the level provided by Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, the Generation Programme and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, it is difficult to untangle the pastoral care from programme delivery. Some elements of pastoral care are unrecorded due to the ad hoc and personalised nature of it. Therefore, hard to quantify the exact monetary investment in pastoral care. The evaluation team have included pastoral care costs in in-kind support, but it cannot be split from other costs. However, as outlined in **Section 2.1**, this investment in pastoral care provides a net positive return for the participants, industry, and society more widely, with these three programmes delivering the highest social return on investment out of the five programmes.

The Rubric provides three ratings Acceptable, Good and Excellent. The Good-Acceptable rating for Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau scholarship is reflective of a change in the level of pastoral care support provided over the course of Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau programme. The pastoral care was assessed as **Good** for the outset, however more recently provision is more reflective of the **Acceptable** in the Rubric. See **section 2.3.5** for further explanation.

Table 13 provides a high-level assessment of each programme’s pastoral care offering against the attributes set out in the Rubric.²⁷

Table 13: Assessment of the programmes’ pastoral care against the Rubric

Pastoral care attribute	Growing Future Farmers	Whangarei A&P Farm Internship	The Generation Programme	Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways	Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship
Participation and access	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good-Acceptable
Systems	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good-Acceptable

2.3.1 The Growing Future Farmers programme’ pastoral care is ‘Good’, although there is some variance in participant experiences

The Growing Future Farmers programme invests in a range of pastoral care supports. These include communications and regional visits with Student Success Advisors, support for host farmers, free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) services, rural support, Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) programme participant support services and input from other external organisations in the community such as the Police.

When benchmarked against the Rubric, the SROI evaluation team rated the Growing Future Farmers programme as providing **Good** pastoral care against both the participation and access, and systems criteria. In terms of participation and access most interviewees emphasised the importance of the “triangle of support” between programme participants, host farmers and Student Success Advisors. They considered the Student Success Advisor role to be critical in providing continuity of support and to act as a ‘sounding board’. However, the SROI evaluation found issues with consistency of delivering pastoral care support. For example, some participants reported there were issues with the frequency of contact with their Student Success Advisors, and that communication methods were limited to a phone call or email rather than face-to-face. One programme partner suggested potential reasons for this variance were due to the geographical area these roles cover with some Student Success Advisors needing to travel significant distances to meet physically with programme participants, as well as funding challenges.

In addition, the SROI evaluation found that participants’ experiences of the support provided by host farmers were mixed, with some host farmers providing suboptimal support. Interview evidence indicates that host farmers take on significant responsibility when investing in the “*future of the sector*”, welcoming programme participants to live and train on their farms. While some host farmers were described as “*the best they can be to provide a good experience for the kids*”, others were

²⁷ It is not appropriate to make direct comparison between the programmes due to variance in scale of operations (i.e., the number of young people supported) and length of time they have been running for. Further, many of these programmes were negatively impacted by COVID-19.

thought to carry unfair expectations of participants in terms of a given participant's level of farming knowledge and skill, or their capacity to learn at pace and undertake various activities on their host farm. Feedback included a farm host expressing frustration because a programme participant was new to farming. This left the programme participant feeling under-appreciated, finding the experience of working on the farm challenging, and wanting to leave (although they carried on with support from their parents). Another participant suggested the Growing Future Farmers programme does not adequately address challenges such as high workload participants are expected to undertake.

Some of these challenges may in part be due to the Growing Future Farmers programme being a nationwide programme that operates across multiple regions. As a result, there are more stakeholders involved, making it more difficult to achieve consistency across the entire programme.

An indication of success of the pastoral care is the number of participants that successfully complete the Growing Future Farmers programme. The administrative data shows the proportion of participants leaving the Growing Future Farmers programme early has diminished between 2022 and 2024, with 27%, 24%, and 13% respectively leaving early. Since inception of the Growing Future Farmers programme a total of 127 programme participants out of 307 (41%) have completed the Growing Future Farmers programme. **Table 14** outlines the number of participants that completed the Growing Future Farmers programme each year, and those that left early.

Table 14: Number of participants that completed the Growing Future Farmers programme each year and the number that left early

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
Completed the programme	10	27	39	51
Left early	22	25	25	18
Number of participants	10 yr2 48 yr1	31 yr2 60 yr1	40 yr2 63 yr1	55 yr2 76 yr1

Interviewees indicated that reasons for leaving early included encountering financial barriers to participating in the Growing Future Farmers programme, relationships with host farmers, independent living arrangements that led to participants feeling homesick, and the farming/rural environment leading to feelings of isolation.

In addition to the pastoral care the Growing Future Farmers programme directly provides, the SROI evaluation found the Growing Future Farmers programme has systems in place that effectively monitor and identify the needs of programme participants. These systems also enable participants to engage with relevant experts who offer specialist support. This has included supporting participants to develop employment-related skills, such as budgeting. For example, one programme partner considered the financial literacy course delivered by Rabobank New Zealand to be particularly valuable, commenting on the opportunity for programme participants to not only understand numbers and budgeting, but also be able to relate this to work on-farm in an applicable and meaningful way.

Similarly, feedback from delivery staff has indicated that programme participants are encouraged to develop relationships by engaging in social opportunities within their communities. A delivery staff member mentioned they “*get students involved in community and get them to give back to the rural community.*” Examples included joining local sports clubs or participating in Surfing for Farmers which provides a way of engaging with other farmers, rural families and industry professionals. Delivery staff that were interviewed suggested that engaging in community activities carried a range of benefits including helping programme participants develop connections which can lead to job opportunities, as well as enhancing their social connections and sense of belonging.

2.3.2 Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme provides ‘Excellent’ pastoral care, leading to most participants completing the programme

Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme invests in a range of pastoral care including providing hands-on and targeted assistance to support participants to complete the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, with a strong emphasis on enabling programme participants to remain employed on their host farm. Supports provided included expectation-setting, removing barriers to academic studies, one-on-one training on the farm as needed, regular monitoring of participants’ well-being and progress, and support to identify and develop their career aspirations.

When benchmarked against the Rubric, the SROI evaluation team rated the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme as providing **Excellent** pastoral care against both the participation and access, and systems criteria. The SROI evaluation found the active engagement from delivery staff and wraparound support offered to all participants was effective. The support provided was tailored to the different needs of individual participants, covering academic support, mental well-being guidance, and navigating expectations between host farmers and programme participants. Monitoring of mental health well-being was viewed as particularly important by delivery staff as participants were typically moving out of home for the first time and could feel isolated on the farm.

Delivery of the pastoral care was supported through regular face-to-face check-ins and the use of the SaferMe app which helps the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme manage risks associated with young people living on host farms. The app is used to monitor, track and address small issues before they escalate. The quality of the pastoral care provided contributes to participants staying in the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, reducing the likelihood of leaving early. In addition, the effective monitoring of participants’ progress helps the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme navigate any mismatch between a host farmer and participants’ expectations or needs, so the necessary support and guidance can be provided to both parties in a timely manner.

The pastoral care provided is strengthened by the support from host farmers, including providing feedback, helping participants recognise their achievements, and encouraging participants to gain a sense of pride in their work. Interviews with host farmers and one programme participant indicated that host farmers provide programme participants with opportunities to carry out tasks with minimal supervision, offering guidance if needed, contributing to programme participants’ autonomy and self-efficacy.

The SROI evaluation found the pastoral care provided contributed to the majority of participants completing the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme. The Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme administrative data indicates that, between 2020 and 2024, 77 out of 88 (approximately 88%) participants in total completed the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme and graduated successfully, while 11 participants (approximately 12%) did not complete the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme.

Interviews with programme participants confirmed the pastoral care was effective. They reflected positively on their experiences, including feeling supported, developing connections with peers, their overall well-being and the weekly classroom sessions. Further, both programme participants and host farmers viewed tutors as helpful and knowledgeable, creating a safe environment for participants to develop their understanding and skills. Examples of this included academic support, such as providing support if a participant found a certain module challenging by working with them on the farm until they had developed the relevant skill, or transcribing assignment or test responses if a participant faces literacy challenges. In addition, most interviewees praised the support the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme continued to provide post-programme, with one programme participant reflecting that delivery staff had continued checking in on them after they had completed the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme.

However, a limitation of the pastoral care identified by programme participants that were interviewed was accessing support can be challenging due to working long hours on the farm. For example, one programme participant recalled how they had considered requesting support but were unable to due to the busy work schedule and on-farm commitments. In this instance, the participant was able to discuss their challenges with delivery staff when they visited the farm.

Both host farmers and programme partners viewed participants developing employment-related life skills, such as punctuality, communication with one's employer and self-management, as very important. Feedback from some host farmers indicated these additional skills were not explicitly taught as part of the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme. They highlighted that this is as an issue, stating that *"they need to look after their health because they can't just pop into the car to go to the doctor."* As a result, they had taken it upon themselves to teach participants these additional skills including cooking, washing, financial literacy, and contract management.

2.3.3 The Generation Programme's pastoral care is 'Excellent', providing effective support to enable programme participants to complete the programme

The Generation Programme, offered by Tūranga Ararau, invests in providing wrap around, holistic pastoral care that is available seven days a week. The Generation Programme applies the Te Whare Tapa Whā model, underpinned by manaakitanga. Components of the pastoral care include building physical fitness, providing kai (nutrition), supporting participants to develop a strong sense of their cultural heritage and identity, providing tailored support to meet participants needs, addressing any issues or risks associated with drugs and alcohol, as well as facilitating enhanced relationships with

whānau and community. In addition, the Generation Programme provides transport to and from the programme and provides participants with full PPE gear.²⁸

When benchmarked against the Rubric, the SROI evaluation team rated the Generation Programme as providing **Excellent** pastoral care against both the participation and access, and systems criteria. The SROI evaluation found the pastoral care is made available to all programme participants, is readily accessible throughout the Generation Programme and provides bespoke support as required. Further, the evidence suggests stakeholders are aware of the pastoral care on offer for participants. Delivery staff actively seek to provide personalised pastoral care through developing personal plans with participants, monitoring participation in the Generation Programme and addressing issues when they arise. The provision of culturally appropriate support is at the heart of what Tūranga Ararau provide in the Generation Programme, as a kaupapa Māori organisation.

In addition, delivery staff stated they remain in contact typically for up to two years post-programme completion. One past participant commented they had continued to have occasional contact with delivery staff for a few years after completing the Generation Programme when seeking advice or support.

Interview evidence indicates the pastoral care contributes to most participants completing the Generation Programme and moving onto employment. Programme administrative data shows that between 2018 and 2023, 106 out of 142 participants (75%) entered employment or further training directly after completing the Generation Programme. Of the 36 participants that did not enter employment, this may be in part due to events such as Covid-19, with some potentially entering employment at a later date.

Interviews with programme participants confirms the provision of pastoral care is highly regarded. Both past and present participants described the delivery staff as generous, caring and committed and are available 24/7. One current participant reiterated the delivery staff provide support for all facets of their life, outlining they are *“supportive in a lot of ways, if you need help here, on the programme or at home, they support you and give you advice.”* The commitment of delivery staff was reflected in feedback they went above and beyond to provide manaaki for participants well-being needs, devoting time outside of paid work hours if necessary. Delivery of the support included in-person visits and check-in phone calls. All the participants viewed delivery staff and employers as attentive, responsive and were understanding, as well as providing honest advice about the realities of working in forestry.

Further, delivery of the pastoral care contributes to improved total well-being, as described in **Sections 2.1.3.3** and **2.1.4.1**. For examples interviews with participants, host employers and delivery staff noted that participants developed maturity, pride in their achievements and a sense of trust in themselves. This was considered to be fostered through encouraging participants to become independent, while also supporting their needs when needed.

²⁸ Tūranga Ararau. (n.d.). Māori Trades and Training Fund Application, p. 14

2.3.4 The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme provides ‘Good’, relationship-based pastoral care

The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme invests in a range of pastoral care, including making deliberate efforts to ensure programme participants feel welcome by building trusting relations through regular engagement, responding quickly when issues arise, providing transportation to and from the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, and lunch when possible. A 2024 Programme Report indicated pastoral care also involves regular liaison with parents and schools “to ensure any barriers towards career and life goals are being met”.²⁹ In addition, a local kaumātua delivers a one-hour presentation each Friday with a focus on personal goal setting and future career planning.³⁰

Based on the evidence available, when benchmarked against the Rubric, the SROI evaluation team rated the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme as providing **Good** pastoral care. The support provided appears to contribute to programme participants feeling comfortable and engaged in the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme, developing social connections and successfully completing the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme was rated as **Good**, as opposed to **Excellent**, due to limited stakeholder involvement and awareness of pastoral care support provided, beyond the immediate delivery staff. When asked about pastoral care, some programme partners appear to have a sense that it will be offered by the delivery staff but were unaware of what the pastoral care support entailed. This could impact programme participants from receiving comprehensive wraparound support. This is an issue especially as this programme is targeted to those who are still in school and may not have the confidence to ask for support outside the school environment. Feedback from the two delivery staff interviewed indicates they view themselves as primarily responsible for the delivery of pastoral care. They commented the small intake allows them to provide students with the attention and appropriate personalised care. Given Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme participants are school students, this is likely to be an appropriate approach.

The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme administrative data indicates that all 54 programme participants from the 2019 to 2024 cohorts have successfully completed the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme.

Interviews with delivery staff and limited feedback through a Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme survey suggest programme participants benefit from the pastoral care provided. Delivery staff believed their support helped improve programme participants’ mental, physical and social well-being. Together with the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme partner that was interviewed, indications are that during the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme participants’ self-confidence and self-esteem improved. Delivery staff also believed that programme

²⁹ The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. (2024). Forestry Pathways Course Report Term 3 2024, p. 1

³⁰ The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. (2024). Forestry Pathways Course Report Term 3 2024, p. 1

participants developed a greater sense of belonging and social connections with their peers through being encouraged to play ball and engage with each other.

Feedback from the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme annual feedback form indicated that programme participants created friends and felt they had been supported to learn “*new skills that can be used throughout my life*”. Some programme participants also praised the efforts of delivery staff, expressing appreciation for the safe learning environment the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme created.

2.3.5 Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme’s pastoral care is ‘Good-Acceptable’, supporting programme participants to complete their studies, however quality varied

Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme provides a range of pastoral care supports, including face-to-face meetings with the Scholarship Coordinator in Christchurch, a buddy system among programme participants between different years, development of a network of peers, financial support, academic support if needed, and internships which created opportunities to develop work experience.

When benchmarked against the Rubric, the SROI evaluation team rated the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme pastoral care as **‘Good-Acceptable’**. The pastoral care was assessed as **Good** when all aspects were delivered consistently, however more recently pastoral care provision is more reflective of the **Acceptable** in the Rubric. The **Good-Acceptable** rating is given to reflect the change in pastoral care support provided over the course of Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme.

The change from **Good** to **Acceptable** was informed by interview evidence which indicates the quality of pastoral care varied. This variance included both the scale and type of support provided, with it diminishing once the decision was made to no longer fund the scholarships. A key contributing factor to this variance appears to be changes in the level of face-to-face engagement, due to MPI making an internal policy decision that significantly restricted the ability for MPI officials to travel, meaning the Scholarship Coordinator was unable to travel to Christchurch. Limited interview evidence with programme participants suggests these visits played an important role in developing relationships, making it easier to contact the Scholarship Coordinator if there was an issue or they wanted some advice. However, other supports are available through the University of Canterbury’s School of Forestry and more broadly across the University.

When the face-to-face and more direct support stopped in later years, interview feedback indicates that this created distance between programme participants and MPI, making it more difficult to engage directly or ask for help, ultimately resulting in programme participants feeling less supported. As a result, programme participants believed the level and quality of support varied depending on who was coordinating the scholarships at MPI. However, University of Canterbury School of Forestry and MPI staff indicated that this variability reflected internal changes within MPI.

In the early years the buddy system was viewed as helping programme participants with the transition to university and contributed to the creation of a closely connected network of programme participants. However, evidence suggests the buddy system was not available for later cohorts. Also,

some programme participants that were interviewed suggested that more guidance on the approach to mentoring could have been provided.

Evidence from administrative data, documents, stakeholder interviews and surveys indicated the pastoral care provided supported programme participants to complete their studies. In addition, the Scholarship sought to provide personalised support engaging with programme participants to address individual needs, monitoring participation and progress in programme participants' studies, and addressing issues when they arose. Further, a business case prepared in 2020 showed the University of Canterbury has an ākonga Māori group that provided culturally appropriate support for Māori programme participants.³¹ Interviews with industry hosts also indicate they had good awareness and appreciation of the support available, which they considered made hosting internships more attractive.

Further, Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship administrative data shows the 2019 intake took on eight programme participants in total, with four graduating in 2023 and three graduating in 2024. The 2020 intake took on six programme participants in total, with five graduating in 2024. The subsequent intakes of programme participants are still completing their studies. Out of the 40 programme participants awarded a scholarship, six had withdrawn with one pursuing an apprenticeship instead.

Evidence from a range of sources indicate that programme participants generally felt supported and encouraged to continue their studies.³² In addition, Forestry School and MPI staff believed the financial and broader wraparound support was particularly helpful for some programme participants who may not have otherwise completed their studies, including those that were at risk of failing and were encouraged to continue, even if they had to repeat a year of study. These stakeholders also found the pastoral care helped programme participants through their exit journey in the instances where some programme participants decided to leave the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme for other reasons. Moreover, eight out of ten programme participant survey respondents (80%) agreed or strongly agreed they received the support they need to finish their studies.

Indications are that contributing factors to the success of the pastoral care supporting programme participants to complete their studies included the financial support provided by the Scholarship, feelings of being well-connected with Te Uru Rākau through regular contact with the Scholarship Coordinator, and the buddy system. One past participant reflected positively on the scholarship as they mentioned there was *“good financial support and job opportunities so good support all round.”* This support was further boosted by support services provided by the university. In addition, School of Forestry and MPI staff considered having someone provide reassurance and set expectations for programme participants was an important aspect of the pastoral care.

Overall, the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme was seen as adding value, including making it easier to meet work experience requirements through the internships.

³¹ Te Uru Rākau. (2020). Business Case: Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau – Te Uru Rākau Forestry Scholarships, p. 23

³² These sources included scholarship documents including a 2019 review and a 2023 evaluation, interviews with scholarship participants and survey responses

CONCLUSION



3 Conclusion

This SROI evaluation found that all of the programmes provided a positive return for the participants, industry and society. The SROI evaluation found the SROI cost-benefit ratios ranged from 3.5 to 17.0. The three programmes that provided the most intensive pastoral care support and served those with the highest level of need delivered the highest SROI cost-benefit ratios, with the Generation Programme returning 10.3, Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme 7.3 and Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme 17.0. Factors contributing to these high ratios were the spillover benefits associated with improved educational outcomes that lead to enhanced personal and longer-term societal outcomes. Indications are that, if these programmes had not been available, a portion of programme participants would have at best ended up with minimum wage employment. Others would potentially have become or remained a NEET. Such outcomes have both a cost to society such as lost productivity and social welfare costs, as well as personal costs such as diminished total well-being. In contrast, these programmes make a positive contribution to enabling many participants to successfully transition from school or being a NEET into meaningful employment with all the broader benefits they bring over a lifetime.

Pastoral care is a contributing factor to the achievement of the expected programme outcomes. The quality of pastoral care provided by these programmes, when benchmarked against the Food and Fibre CoVE Rubric, ranged from **Good-Acceptable** for one programme (the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme), **Good** for two programmes (the Growing Future Farmers programme, the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme) and **Excellent** for two programmes (Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme, and the Generation Programme). Providing quality pastoral care is particularly important to the success of the vocational programmes as it played a crucial role in enabling participants to successfully complete their programme. This was particularly the case for young people who face a range of social and academic challenges, enabling these participants to gain both qualifications and meaningful sustainable employment they may not have achieved otherwise.

Based on the evidence available, indications are these programmes are making a contribution to filling labour gaps. Feedback on the vocational programmes suggests that industry values the work skills and knowledge generated through the programmes, with farmers and forestry employers increasingly looking to recruit participants who have completed one of these programmes. Moreover, indications are that as programmes become established and develop a positive reputation this would lead to demand from industry exceeding supply. However, for many of these programmes scaling up to be able to meet increasing demand from industry is challenging.

A key challenge to both the growth and continued viability of these programmes is secure or longer-term funding; especially since funding for the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme has ceased. Most of these programmes use a mixed funding model which involves government, industry and philanthropic funding. However, some programmes such as the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme and the Generation Programme primarily rely on government funding, which typically has relatively short funding periods. For the vocational programmes, a significant barrier to acquiring sustainable funding is they do not qualify as a tertiary education provider or as offering apprenticeships, preventing the programmes accessing the funding schemes available. In addition to making these programmes vulnerable to closure if further funding is not attained, this situation limits

opportunities for growth. All the programmes reported they had high demand for their respective programme, but most were not able to grow to meet this demand due to funding constraints as they could not afford to employ more tutors, meaning some young people who could benefit from this investment miss out. The one exception in terms of growth was the Growing Future Farmers programme which operates at a national level and received approximately 40% of its funding from industry. In addition, sources of government funding such as MSD Flexi-wage carry risks of requiring vocational programmes to change who they primarily serve from school leavers to serving NEETs or those experiencing long-term unemployment challenges more generally. This could mean in the future some programmes cease to provide preventative interventions to the same extent; instead, school leavers may need to have become a NEET first before they can access the programme.

Finally, the use of an earn-as-you-learn model or a student allowance model potentially has implications for the ability of young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds to access these programmes. For example, the Generation Programme and the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme model uses an earn-as-you-learn model. For the Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme it also included providing participants with all the necessary farm gear such as clothing. This meant that young people, regardless of their background, were able to join these programmes. This model works well for regions like Te Tai Tokerau and Te Tairāwhiti which face a range of social and economic challenges. In addition, feedback from Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme host farmers and participants considered earning an income was fair given the contribution these young people made to the farm. In contrast, the Growing Future Farmers programme has applied a student allowance model in which participants are paid an allowance of \$200 per week and need to purchase all of their farm gear including having a car, smart phone, laptop and clothing. Although participants are eligible for a Student Loan, there is some evidence to suggest that this approach creates a financial burden that acts as a barrier for some young people to participate in the Growing Future Farmers programme. Moreover, feedback from participants indicates that not being paid for their labour can leave them feeling undervalued, especially when they find themselves working long hours on the farm.

These findings do not suggest the Growing Future Farmers programme model does not effectively deliver the expected outcomes; on the contrary, this programme is managing to upscale, working across 14 regions, supporting more than 100 participants per year. Rather, it raises policy questions about the purpose of these programmes. If it is simply to address labour shortages in industries such as farming and forestry, then the ability to upscale may be the most important driver. On the other hand, if the intention is to both address labour shortages and provide young people facing a range of challenges with accessible vocational pathways to transition into meaningful work, then it could be important that an earn-as-you-learn model is used. It is worth noting the latter option also returns a slightly higher SROI cost-benefit ratio as seen by the Generation Programme and the Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme. To determine the extent to which the student allowance model acts as a barrier for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds participating in these types of vocational programmes, further research would be required.

APPENDICES



Appendix A: SROI Evaluation Frameworks

Growing Future Farmers programme

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	CRITERIA	AREA OF INVESTIGATION	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1 To what extent does the Programme address an identified need?	Appropriateness	Target population reach and need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully identifies young people who have an interest in farming Programme is appealing to target population, attracting ongoing demand Provides students with an alternative pathway into meaningful employment Fills a gap in training/employment opportunities, providing young people with a defined pathway to enter the agricultural sector
		Meets primary sector workforce need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme graduates are suitably qualified to meet agricultural sector needs Contributes to filling workforce gaps in farming and the agricultural sector
	Coherence	Interactions with similar Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme complements, but does not duplicate, other place-based vocational training in farming
2 To what extent have the Programme's intended outcomes been realised?	Impact	Achievement of short- and medium-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have the necessary skills and qualifications to secure and sustain employment in the agribusiness sector on completion of the Programme Students have identified and are pursuing their career aspirations Farmers and agribusinesses perceive that programme graduates have a good work ethic Farmers and agribusinesses perceive improved ability to recruit farm workers that have the necessary skills to meet farm labour needs now and in the future Farmers report participating in the Programme was beneficial to how they run their farm
3 How effective has the pastoral care been in enabling young people to successfully complete the Programme?	Effectiveness	Efficacy of pastoral care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students remain employed on host farm and successfully complete the Programme Students gain qualifications (i.e. NZQA level 2 or 3, and Growing Future Farmers' Essential Farm Skills Certificate) Students have developed employment-related life skills Students have enhanced social connections and greater sense of belonging Students have improved self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of identity and pride in the farming community and rural sector
4 What lessons have been learned?	This is an analytical question – findings are identified through synthesis of data		

Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	CRITERIA	AREA OF INVESTIGATION	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1	Appropriateness	Target population reach and need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully identifies young people not thriving at school and/or needing additional academic support who have an interest in farming Programme is appealing to target population, attracting ongoing demand Provides participants with an alternative pathway into meaningful employment Fills a local gap in training/employment opportunities, enabling young people to remain in Te Tai Tokerau
		Meets primary sector workforce need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme graduates are suitably qualified to meet primary sector needs Contributes to filling local workforce gaps in farming and the primary sector
	Coherence	Interactions with similar Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme complements, but does not duplicate, other place-based vocational training in Te Tai Tokerau
2	Impact	Achievement of short- and medium-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interns are well placed to undertake further training/education options on completion of the Programme Interns have developed necessary farming skills to secure and sustain employment on completion of the Programme Interns have identified and are pursuing their career aspirations Interns develop appropriate level of skill to fill labour gaps on the farm and improve productivity Interns are trusted to do a good job, giving them more responsibility over time Farmers perceive increased ability to fill more senior roles due to level of skill and knowledge interns have developed
3	Effectiveness	Efficacy of pastoral care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interns remain employed on host farm and successfully complete the Programme Interns gain qualifications (i.e. NZQA level 3, NZQA level 4 Certificate in Agriculture) Interns have developed employment-related life skills Interns have improved wellbeing including improved self-confidence, self-esteem, awareness of their own skills and contribution, and greater sense of belonging Interns have improved connections and networks with peers in the industry
4	What lessons have been learned? This is an analytical question – findings are identified through synthesis of data		

The Generation Programme

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	CRITERIA	AREA OF INVESTIGATION	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1 To what extent does the Programme address an identified need?	Appropriateness	Target population reach and need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully identifies rangatahi facing a range of social challenges and/or needing additional academic support who have an interest in forestry Programme is appealing to target population, attracting ongoing demand Provides participants with an alternative pathway into meaningful employment Fills a local gap in training/employment opportunities, enabling rangatahi to remain in Te Tairāwhiti
		Meets primary sector workforce need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tauira are suitably qualified to meet forestry sector new entrant workforce needs Contributes to filling local workforce gaps in local forestry and the primary sector
	Coherence	Interactions with similar Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme complements, but does not duplicate, other place-based vocational training in Te Tairāwhiti
2 To what extent have the Programme's intended outcomes been realised?	Impact	Achievement of short- and medium-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tauira are well placed to undertake further employment-based training/education on completion of the Programme Tauira have developed necessary skills to secure and sustain employment, especially in forestry, on completion of the Programme Tauira have identified their career aspirations and are pursuing them Tauira are well positioned to start their own business and/or secure roles involving more responsibility and higher pay Forestry businesses perceive increased ability to recruit suitably qualified workforce Forest estates perceive increased ability to have rangatahi affiliated to Te Tairāwhiti iwi working on the whenua as kaitiaki
3 How effective has the pastoral care been in enabling young people to successfully complete the Programme?	Effectiveness	Efficacy of pastoral care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tauira successfully complete the Programme Tauira gain qualifications (e.g. NZQA Level 2 or NZQA Level 3) Tauira have improved physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing including a strong sense of their heritage and identity, improved self-confidence, and self-esteem Tauira have strengthened engagement with their whānau, community, and marae
4 What lessons have been learned?	This is an analytical question – findings are identified through synthesis of data		

Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	CRITERIA	AREA OF INVESTIGATION	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1 To what extent does the Course address an identified need?	Appropriateness	Target population reach and need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully identifies young people not thriving at school and/or needing additional academic support who have an interest in forestry Course is appealing to target population, attracting ongoing demand Provides school students with an alternative educational pathway that could lead to meaningful employment
		Meets primary sector workforce need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course graduates are suitably qualified to meet primary sector new entrant workforce needs Contributes to filling local workforce gaps in forestry and the primary sector
	Coherence	Interactions with similar Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course complements, but does not duplicate, other alternative education offered in Southland
2 To what extent have the Course's intended outcomes been realised?	Impact	Achievement of short- and medium-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are well placed to undertake further training/education options on completion of the Course Students have developed necessary forestry skills to secure and sustain employment on completion of the Course Students have identified their personal goals Students have identified their career aspirations and are pursuing them Students develop appropriate level of skill to fill labour gaps in forestry
3 How effective has the pastoral care been in enabling young people to successfully complete the Course?	Effectiveness	Efficacy of pastoral care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students successfully complete the Course Students gain NCEA standards contributing to NZQA level 2 or NZQA level 3 Students have improved wellbeing including improved self-confidence, self-esteem, awareness of their own skills and contribution, and greater sense of belonging Students have improved social skills and connections with the forestry industry
4 What lessons have been learned?	This is an analytical question – findings are identified through synthesis of data		

Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	CRITERIA	AREA OF INVESTIGATION	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
1	Appropriateness	Target population reach and need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully encouraged Māori and people who identify as female who have an interest in forestry and the necessary aptitude to complete a diploma or degree in forestry Successfully encouraged more people to apply to do a degree or diploma in forestry Scholarship appealed to target population, attracting ongoing demand
		Meets primary sector workforce need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were suitably qualified to meet forestry sector workforce needs Contributed to filling workforce gaps in forestry sector in Aotearoa New Zealand
	Coherence	Interactions with similar Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship complemented, but did not duplicate, other programmes designed to increase applications to complete a diploma or degree in forestry
2	Impact	Achievement of short- and medium-term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More students completed a diploma or degree in forestry, especially Māori and people who identify as female Students developed the necessary forestry skills to secure and sustain employment on completion of their diploma or degree Students identified their career aspirations and are pursuing them More Māori and people who identify as female are employed in higher skilled and paid roles in forestry Forestry and wood processing businesses perceive increased access to workforce with advanced forestry and/or other qualifications
3	Effectiveness	Efficacy of pastoral care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students successfully completed their diploma or degree Students successfully completed paid internship placements
4	What lessons have been learned? This is an analytical question – findings are identified through synthesis of data		

Appendix B: Theories of Change

Growing Future Farmers programme

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding (farmers, government, industry, & donors)• Farmers• Student Success Advisors• Broader learning support network• Farm gear• Professional dog trainer support & two dogs• Locations with approved Trainers including farms• External training providers• Farm provisions incl. accommodation, WiFi, power, & food• Pastoral care including health, safety, & wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract & select students & Farmers• Match students with Farmers• Provide students with a weekly allowance• Professional dog trainer teaches students to care for & train their dogs• Organise academic & practical learning days• Organise training to upskill Farmers• Student Success Advisors facilitate progress reporting with Farmers• Provide pastoral care including access to EAP & local community/rural support services• Build & maintain relationships with Farmers, farm team, farm whānau, & stakeholders• Organise regional cohort get-togethers & rural community activities• Ongoing programme & curriculum development	Potential students have been identified & selected	Students have improved agribusiness employment opportunities through becoming farm-ready workers & achieving tertiary qualifications	Students participate in sustained employment in the agribusiness sector in work that is aligned with their career aspirations	Improved productivity, resilience, & ability to adopt new innovations in the agribusiness sector	Contribute to improved economic & social sustainability of the agribusiness sector in Aotearoa New Zealand	
		Students have gained NZQA qualifications (Level 2 or 3) & Growing Future Farmers' Essential Farm Skills Certificate	Students have developed work ethic & positive mindset with an improved understanding of their career aspirations & confidence to pursue these				
		Students have been supported to develop future-focused, practical farming & life skills	Farmers & agribusinesses have improved access to a diverse workforce that is well-positioned to meet labour demands now & in the future	Improved workplace safety, farming standards & workplace culture on participating farms			
		Students have developed employment-related life skills & career aspirations	Students have enhanced social connections, self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of identity, & pride in the farming community & rural sector		Improved civic engagement		
		Farmers have been trained to provide safe environments & train students well	Students have greater sense of self-worth, belonging, & sense of service to the community				
		Students have become part of the wider farming community through local contribution & participation					

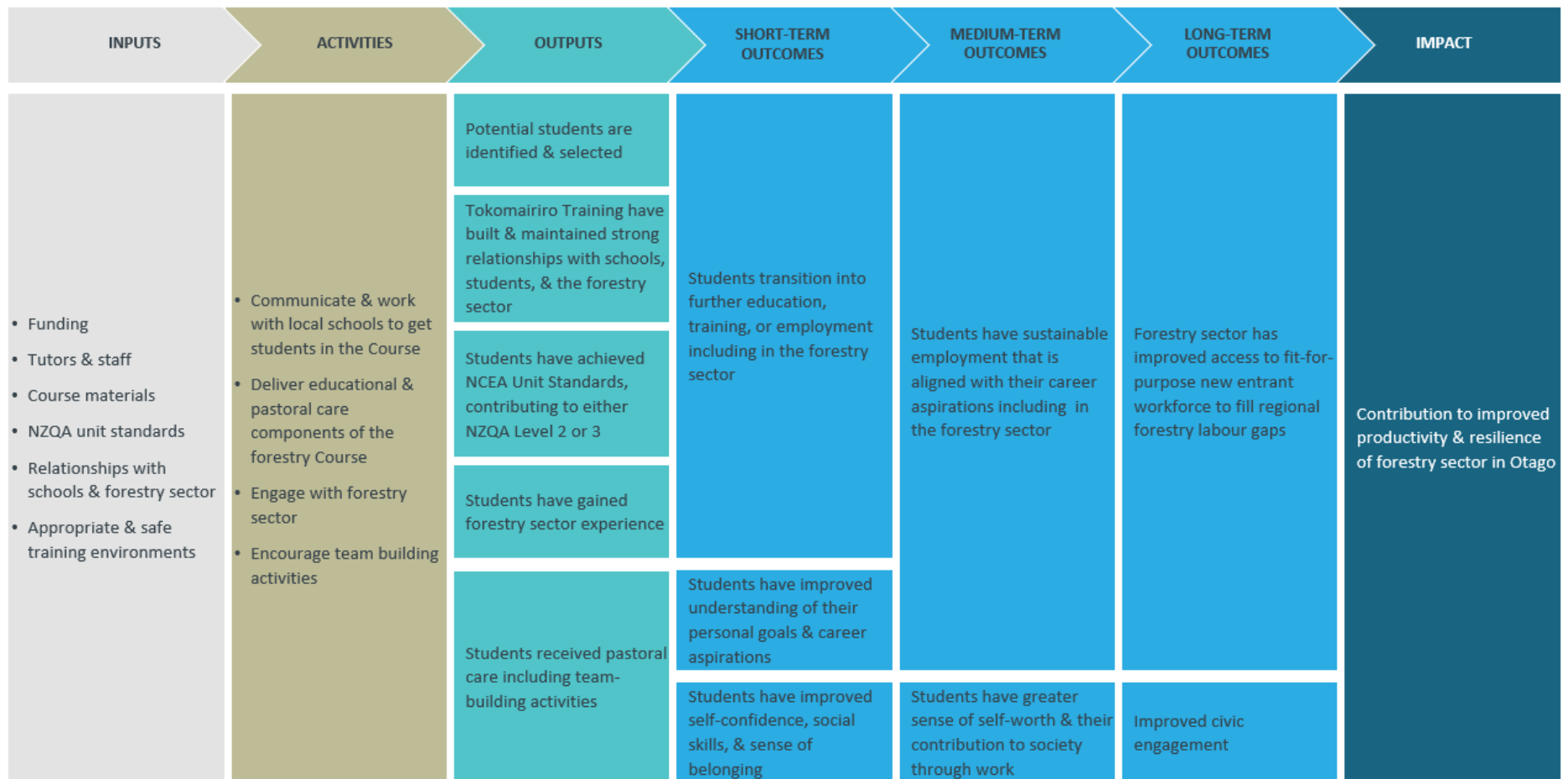
Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
Funding Selection processes Host farms & farmers Support staff Training institution & locations Farm gear Accommodation & food Relationships with farmers, schools, & broader networks Pastoral care	Promote the programme including career roadshow Locate farms willing & able to take on interns Facilitate intensive selection process Match interns with suitable farmers Support interns to transition into improved employment opportunities &/or further training Establish & maintain strong relationships with farmers, schools, & broader networks Provide pastoral care, including development of employment-related life skills & support to remain employed on the farm	Potential future interns have been identified Interns have gained NZQA qualifications (Level 3 or 4 NZ Certificate in Agriculture) Interns have been in full-time paid employment leading to development of farming skills & on-the-job experience Whangarei A&P Society has built & maintained strong relationships with interns, high schools, farmers, & broader networks Interns have developed employment-related life skills including self-care & work preparedness	Interns have options for further education &/or training Interns have necessary skills to remain on farm or participate in improved employment opportunities Interns have improved understanding of their career aspirations Farmers have trusted, trained, & skilled on-farm labour to meet their particular farming needs Increased employment opportunities through creation of new jobs on farms Interns have improved wellbeing with enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence, & social connections	Interns participate in meaningful & sustained employment in the farming sector with improved job prospects that are aligned to their career aspirations Farmers & the farming sector have improved access to a suitably skilled workforce that is well-positioned for more senior roles & future developments in the farming sector Interns have greater sense of self-worth & connection with local communities	Increased productivity, competitiveness & resilience of the farming sector in Te Tai Tokerau Improved civic engagement	Contribution to improved economic & social sustainability of Te Tai Tokerau

The Generation Programme

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marketing materialsFundingProgramme materialsTraining environmentsTutorsKaumātua support & guidanceTransport to & from training venuesProvision of mealsPersonal protective equipmentWrap-around pastoral careRelationships with whānau, hapū, Iwi, & hapori to engage with rangatahiWorking relationships with Te Rūnanga o Tūraganui ā Kiwa & other support servicesWorking relationships with local schools, government agencies, sports & kapa haka, roopu, whānau working in the industry, & employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote programme through range of marketing strategiesEngage tauiraDeliver programme including heritage (Ko Wai Au), employment life skills, & on-the-job sector relevant training tailored to industry needsTeach & award NCEA qualificationsMatch tauira with contractors & employersDevelop tauira personalised development planDeliver tauira personalised wrap-around pastoral careSupport & promote whānau involvementCreate & maintain relationships & connections with whānau, hapū, iwi, hapori, local schools, & broader key stakeholders	Potential future tauira have been engaged & selected	Tauira have options for further employment-based training opportunities (such as NCEA Level 4 qualifications including apprenticeships) &/or further education	Tauira have sustainable employment in the forestry sector with improved job prospects including starting their own business within the sector	Improved productivity & returns for contractors & forest owners, while maintaining worker safety & product quality without compromising te taiao	Contributing to collective wellbeing, environmental sustainability, & economic development in Te Tairāwhiti
		Tauira have gained a higher-level forestry industry qualification at NCEA Level 2 &/or Level 3	Tauira have a better understanding of their career aspirations & the confidence to pursue them			
		Tauira have participated in safe, paid place-based work training	Tauira have necessary skills to secure employment, especially in the forestry sector			
		Tauira have developed employment-related life skills	Forest estates are able to have rangatahi affiliated to Te Tairāwhiti iwi working on the land as kaitiaki preserving the whenua for both present & future generations			
		Tūranga Ararau have built & maintained strong relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi, hapori, Te Tairāwhiti forestry industry, & broad range of other stakeholders	Tauira have developed a strong sense of their heritage & identity, which supports improved self-confidence & self-esteem	Tauira have strengthened engagement with whānau, community, & marae		
		Tauira have completed Ko Wai Au programme & their personalised development plans	Tauira have improved mental, emotional, physical, & spiritual wellbeing			

Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme



Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government funding Industry hosts Pastoral care Relationships with tertiary education providers, forestry & wood processing sector, government departments, & other relevant parties Scholarship tools including assessment criteria & applications Relevant bachelor & diploma courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional campaign to attract students Assess & award scholarships Provide financial support to degree & diploma students Engage & build relationships with tertiary education providers, schools, students, & sector Provide pastoral care Provide forestry students with work experience with MPI/forestry sector organisation 	Students, especially Māori & people who identify as female, have received pastoral care & financial support throughout duration of study	More students, especially Māori & people who identify as female, complete a Bachelor of Forestry Science, Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Forest Engineering, or Diploma in Forest Management	More Māori & people who identify as female are employed in higher skilled & paid roles in the forestry sector	More diverse & inclusive forestry workplaces including integrating Te Ao Māori worldviews & cultural values	Improved community representation & diversity of thinking in the forestry sector, leading to stronger decision-making
		Students have gained forestry sector experience & connections				
		Te Uru Rākau has built & maintained strong relationships across tertiary education providers, sector, & schools	More tertiary qualified students in forestry with sector experience & career aspirations	The forestry & wood processing sectors have increased access to a workforce with advanced forestry &/or other higher-level qualifications	Increased ability to fill foreseeable skill gaps in higher level roles in the forestry sector	Higher retention, improved productivity, & competitiveness of forestry sector, contributing to better economic outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand

Appendix C: Key Documents

Programme	Documents reviewed
Growing Future Farmers	<p>About Us (leaflet)</p> <p>Partnership Opportunities (2024)</p> <p>Performance Report (2020)</p> <p>Performance Report (2021)</p> <p>Performance Report (2022)</p> <p>Performance Report (2023)</p> <p>Q&A Summary from Online Webinar (2024)</p> <p>Qualifications and Funding Breakdown</p> <p>Strategy 2023-2027</p> <p>Programme participant Gear List 2025</p> <p>Programme participant Handbook 2023</p>
Whangarei A&P Farm Internship	<p>Farm Intern Programme Prospectus (2023-2024)</p> <p>Farm Intern Programme – Summary, Results, Testimonials</p> <p>LBT Qualifications – Farm Intern Programme Course Content 2024</p> <p>Provincial Growth Fund: Skills and Employment (Te Ara Mahi) Funding Agreement</p> <p>Whangarei A&P Farm Intern Programme Report 1 (December 2020)</p> <p>Whangarei A&P Farm Intern Programme Report 10 (June 2024)</p> <p>Where are the interns now (October 2024)</p>
The Generation Programme	<p>Eastland Wood Council Careers Information Sheet</p> <p>Generation Programme Case Study</p> <p>Generation Programme Quarterly Report (July 2024)</p> <p>Generation Programme Quarterly Report (September 2024)</p> <p>Māori Trades and Training Fund Application</p>
Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways	<p>Forestry Pathways Course Report Term 2 2024</p> <p>Forestry Pathways Course Report Term 3 2024</p> <p>Tokomairiro Training Programme of Intentions: Forestry Course 2018</p>
Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship	<p>Aide Memoir: Visit to University of Canterbury – Wednesday 15 June (2022)</p> <p>Briefing: Forestry Scholarships (2018)</p> <p>Business Case: Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau – Te Uru Rākau Forestry Scholarships (2020)</p> <p>Education and training opportunities for silviculture and harvesting (2022)</p> <p>Education and training opportunities for wood processing and wood manufacturing (2022)</p> <p>Education and training opportunities for wood processing and wood manufacturing: Report Summary (2022)</p> <p>Food & Fibre Skills Action Plan 2019-2022</p> <p>Forestry and wood processing labour force survey – NZIER report to MPI (2021)</p> <p>Forestry and wood processing sector: Briefing to Incoming Ministers 2023</p> <p>Forestry and Wood Processing Workforce Action Plan 2020-2024</p> <p>Forestry Scholarships: Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau (leaflet; 2018)</p> <p>How far have our forestry science graduates gone? (conference paper; 2024)</p> <p>Memorandum: MPI Forestry Scholarships 2018 – Hand over and Lessons Learnt</p> <p>Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Forestry Scholarships (leaflet; 2022)</p> <p>Overview of the Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Forestry Scholarship Programme 2018-2023</p> <p>Programme report: Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Forestry Scholarships (2022)</p> <p>Qualifications stock take (2021)</p> <p>Silviculture Labour Requirements Survey</p> <p>Te Ara Whakahou – Ahumahi Ngahere: Draft Industry Transformation Plan (2022)</p> <p>2019 Forestry Labour Requirements Survey</p>

Appendix D: SROI Cost-Benefit Ratio Calculation – detailed methodology

Introduction

Individuals who enter adulthood with better education, in better health, and with a greater attachment to society, are more likely to find better paying employment.

In addition to the private benefit to individuals there is likely to be a positive spillover for the rest of society. This might materialise, for example, through a lower level of beneficiary dependence or an efficiency gain through better labour market matching³³.

To undertake the SROI we adopted the ‘life course’ theory, which promotes early preventative interventions that reduce the need for remedial actions later in life. Programmes and strategies targeting adolescents that boost motivation, encourage positive attitudes, and enhance social skills are likely to be cost-effective interventions that will both promote economic efficiency and reduce lifetime inequality.

This life course philosophy is well summarised by Nobel laureate, James Heckman in an essay in the Boston Review, Promoting Social Mobility.³⁴).

Heckman notes three important lessons for social policy:

1. Life success depends on more than cognitive skills. Non-cognitive characteristics – including physical and mental health, as well as perseverance, attentiveness, motivation, self-confidence, and other socio-emotional qualities – are also essential.
2. Both cognitive and socio-emotional skills develop in early childhood, and their development depends on the family environment. Disadvantage tends to accumulate across generations.
3. Early interventions can improve cognitive as well as socio-emotional skills. They promote schooling, reduce crime, foster workforce productivity, and reduce teenage pregnancy. And they have much greater economic and social impact than the later interventions such as reducing pupil-teacher ratios, providing public job training, convict rehabilitation programmes, adult literacy programmes and spending on police. In fact, the benefits of later interventions are greatly enhanced by earlier interventions: skill begets skill; motivation begets motivation.

Returns to education

Empirical studies typically find that on average, an additional year of education increases an individual’s future earnings by somewhere between 5% and 15% depending on location, date of study

³³ Infometrics. (2013). *Growing Great Futures report*.

³⁴ Heckman, J.J. (2012). *Promoting Social Mobility*. <https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/promoting-social-mobility-james-heckman/>

and analysis technique.³⁵ Variations due to individuals' innate abilities and non-cognitive characteristics such as initiative, attentiveness and perseverance also affect these estimates.³⁶

Data from the New Zealand Ministry of Education shows the earnings premium of a Level 3 qualification over the minimum wage reaches 36% after ten years, with a further 13% for a Level 4 qualification. Two years of extra study required for a diploma generates an additional premium of 10%, with another 30% for a degree. Importantly, however, these estimates are simple ex post comparisons that do not control for other factors such as innate ability.

Therefore, for the purpose of the SROI cost-benefit ratio calculations for this evaluation we have assumed, after ten years:

- a 20% premium for Levels 2 and 3 over the minimum wage
- a further 10% for Level 4
- a further 10% for a diploma
- and a further 20% for a degree.

These assumptions can be sensitivity tested. The annualised minimum wage for year ended March 2024 is \$47,300. All calculations are in constant 2023/24 prices.

Counterfactuals

For the food and fibre programmes that lead to Level 2 or 3 qualifications, we have assumed the earnings counterfactual is the minimum wage. Given the academic and social disadvantages such as long-term benefit dependency that characterise many of the participants in these programmes, that seems plausible, perhaps even somewhat conservative.

For programmes that lead to a higher qualification, the earnings counterfactual is one qualification level lower. For example, for programmes that end with participants receiving a diploma we have assumed the counterfactual is a Level 4 post-school certificate, while for those receiving a degree, the counterfactual is a diploma. Effectively, programme participants are enabled to obtain a qualification that is approximately one level higher than they would achieve without the assistance provided through participation in these programmes.

In general earnings rise with age, but that is also true of the counterfactual scenario. Hence, we have ignored that effect as it is primarily related to increasing experience and seniority in one's chosen occupation, with only a very small residual effect from the earlier vocational training.³⁷

No premium has been added for different subject areas. For example, a Level 3 certificate in agriculture is treated the same as a Level 3 certificate in forestry operations. In part this avoids

³⁵ Temple, J. (2001). *Growth effects of education and social capital in the OECD countries*. International Macroeconomics, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Discussion Paper no. 2875.

³⁶ The definition of non-cognitive characteristics differs between disciplines. Psychology typically places more characteristics, such as motivation, in the cognitive category than does economics.

³⁷ This can be considered as a level shift in a graph of earning against age.

spurious accuracy, but it also recognises that graduates often move to jobs later in their career that are not strongly related to their specialist qualification.

Beyond earnings – spillover benefits

Going beyond earnings, there is also a strong link between education outcomes and personal well-being and societal well-being. With regard to the former association, children and adolescents who enjoy better health outcomes, typically obtain better education outcomes. The interaction is complex and likely bi-directional. Healthier children and adolescents will perhaps have greater school attendance and apply themselves more readily to their studies. On the other hand, more intelligent or motivated children might not only fare better at school, but also might make healthier life choices. And embedded within both directions of influence are the profound effects of the home environment and inter-generational behaviour and expectations.

Indeed, reminding us of the correlation-causation debate, it is possible that many of the benefits attributed to education might just as plausibly be due to physical, psychological and social well-being. Gradstein & Justman argue that a major role of schools is their socialising role.³⁸ That is, it is the place where people learn most about interacting with others.

Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence documenting a relationship between education outcomes and better social and economic outcomes. For example, longitudinal health and development studies based on birth cohorts in Dunedin and Christchurch demonstrate that better-educated people were less likely to have some types of mental health disorders, less likely to commit crimes and to have a criminal conviction, less likely to be unemployed, less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour and less likely to show early signs of some health problems.³⁹

McMahon splits the social return to education into private non-market benefits (such as better health of one's family and high-quality childcare) and wider social spillovers (such as lower crime, less air pollution and greater technology diffusion), estimating the total value of all spillover benefits are only slightly lower than the value of private market benefits.⁴⁰

Decomposition analysis of economic growth finds that an increase in educational attainment, as well as a direct effect, accounts for about one tenth of the consequent growth in aggregate value added (GDP) – or about one fifth of the productivity residual that remains after accounting for the contribution of quality adjusted labour and capital.⁴¹

This productivity spillover is a useful shorthand method for accounting for the net impact of all the different ways the presence of a better educated population can improve national well-being. That might include outcomes such as better health, less crime, improved civic participation and greater life satisfaction. The spillover effect is picking up as much on potential reductions in deadweight losses to

³⁸ Gradstein, M., & Justman, M. (2002). Education, social cohesion and economic growth. *American Economic Review*, 92(4), 1192-1204.

³⁹ Johnston, G. (2004). *Healthy, wealthy and wise? A review of the wider benefits of education*. New Zealand Treasury Working Paper no 04/04

⁴⁰ McMahon, W. (2010). The external benefits of education. *International Encyclopedia of Education*. No. 1226.

⁴¹ Temple, J. (2001). *Growth effects of education and social capital in the OECD countries*. International Macroeconomics, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Discussion Paper no. 2875.

society, such as from not having to publicly fund as much health care or spending less on the justice system, as it is on the added positive contribution that comes from people being gainfully employed.

However, the evidence of a social impact from particular programmes is thin, and therefore we consider it prudent to be conservative in the choice of assumptions underpinning our calculations of the SROI cost-benefit ratios of these programmes. Accordingly, if the return to a single qualification increment beyond Level 3 is, say, 10% (as documented above), we have assumed there is also a spillover impact in terms of economic productivity for the rest of the economy from these programmes of 2% of GDP per capita, though McMahon's analysis implies that this is conservative.⁴²

To put this amount into perspective, GDP per person of working age is \$96,300, so 2% of that is \$1900. According to Treasury's CBAX tool, the marginal cost of keeping a sentenced inmate in prison is \$17,500 per year, the same as the social cost per incident of a drug offence.⁴³ An inpatient hospital visit costs \$7500 while the social benefit obtained from cultural belonging is worth \$4000 per year. Treasury has many more such examples. Thus, it does not take many of these effects, even at sporadic intervals, to justify a spillover benefit of \$1900 per year.

Attribution

The challenge of SROI assessment is attribution. We can generally assess whether an intervention has produced or is likely to produce an effect, but attribution is always uncertain as one can never be sure of the counterfactual. To mitigate this, we have relied on careful application of the *Theory of Change*, plausible reasoning around the intervention logic and where possible on the testimony of participants, albeit that even they may not have a good idea of what they might have done without the intervention or in other circumstances.

A more robust method is an econometric comparison of the intervention (or target) group with a control group. Even with groups that match as much as possible, and after using robust econometric techniques to reduce possible self-selection bias caused by unobservable factors such as motivation, attribution is never 100% certain. That sort of analysis is well beyond the scope of this project.

Hence, we have relied on our assessment of the intervention logic. The issue is not that similar programmes wouldn't produce similar outcomes. Rather it is that without access to any such programmes, the participants would most probably not experience anywhere near the same degree of self-fulfilment, nor make the same contribution to society in general.

Our assessment of the five programmes with regard to the spillover effects (as a percentage of GDP per person of working age) that may be attributed to them are listed on the following page in **Table 15**. As with the direct return to education, these percentages are not the gross spillover effects. For example, the literature would suggest more for degree qualifications (such as obtained through Te Uru Rākau scholarships) than for Level 3 qualifications. The numbers in **Table 15** are intended to

⁴² McMahon, W. (2010). The external benefits of education. International Encyclopedia of Education. No. 1226.

⁴³ Treasury (2024). The Treasury's CBAX Tool. <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/state-sector-leadership/investment-management/investment-planning/treasury-cbax-tool>

represent the incremental effect of the programmes relative to what programme participants would obtain in the counterfactual case, namely one qualification level lower.

Table 15: Assumed spillover effects

Programme	Spillover
Whangarei A&P Farm Internship programme	2.0%
The Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways programme	2.0%
The Generation Programme	2.0%
The Growing Future Farmers programme	1.5%
Ngā Karahipi Uru Rākau Scholarship programme	1.0%

Further explanation is given in the sections on the various programmes, but in brief, programmes with programme participants who were at the greatest level of disadvantage (poor academic achievement, intergenerational poverty, lacking in confidence and so on) coupled with the geographic catchment area of a programme's operation, are likely to generate the highest spillover effects.

Aside from what may be considered standard types of spillover benefits such as less benefit dependency, better nutrition, and less involvement with the justice system, two other types are notable in context of these programmes: labour market matching and community connection.

All of the programmes have the aim of increasing employment, which itself is not a spillover benefit, but more efficient matching of labour demand and supply is. All programmes have an industry focus (agriculture or forestry) and three also have a regional focus – Tairāwhiti (East Coast), Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) and Tokomairiro (around Milton in Otago). An industry focus means that labour skills and qualifications are aligned with those desired by employers, while a regional focus reduces the need for commuting or migration and lowers search costs.

A regional focus has the additional benefit of programme participants and alumni being able to maintain social connections, break localised instances of intergenerational unemployment and demonstrate positive examples of success through education. Further, higher employment rates in a region may mitigate economic decay by maintaining sufficient demand for a wide range of commercial and social activities: from cafés and banks to medical services and schools.

Appendix E: References

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